

Parshat Lech Lecha – The Heh of Avraham

written by Meir Elkabas

October 26, 2023



A notable highlight in this Parsha is the transformation of Avram into Avraham.

After his victory over the four kings, and his rescue of Lot, he began to worry about losing his merits for the World to Come. However, Hashem assured him that his reward remained

intact despite his incredible feats during the miraculous war.

During this conversation, Avram Avinu expressed his concern about the blessings he received from Hashem, given that he had no children. In response, Hashem promised to change his name from Avram to Avraham, and a similar change for Sarai to Sarah, by adding the letter 'heh' to their names. This 'heh' has a special significance that Rebbe Nachman explores, known as the "Heh of Da'at (Knowledge)." In Likutey Moharan Lesson 53, Rebbe Nachman details the five distinctions between our da'at (knowledge) and Hashem's Da'at.

Hashem's promise to Avram Avinu was that by adding the letter 'heh,' specifically related to da'at, he would be able to give birth. Rebbe Nachman further elucidates that da'at plays a crucial role in a person's ability to give birth, and infertility is often connected to a lack of da'at.

Judaism emphasizes the idea that birth is intrinsically tied to da'at, as the seed of man originates in the mind before descending to the kidneys and ultimately leading to reproduction. Therefore, da'at is an integral aspect of the process.

Reb Noson adds another layer to this concept by explaining that there are five types of grains that contribute to da'at. He highlights the importance of one's food intake, asserting that it directly impacts da'at. These five grains also correlate with the five distinctions between our da'at and Hashem's da'at.

Moreover, Reb Noson emphasizes the significance of simcha (joy) as a prerequisite for food to influence da'at, connecting it to the five "kolot" (sounds) of joy.

To access the keter, as Rebbe Nachman teaches, simcha (joy) is a prerequisite. Reb Noson eloquently encapsulates this concept by drawing from the Gemara, (Shabbat, 87-88), which discusses the Jewish people receiving the Torah.

When the Jewish people declared, “We will do and we will listen,” 600,000 angels placed two crowns on each Jew’s head: one for saying “We will do” and one for “We will listen.” However, during the sin of the golden calf, 1,200,000 angels descended to retrieve the crowns. The Gemara also states that, in the future, Hashem will return the crowns to the Jewish people. As the verse from Isaiah (35:10), “The simcha of the world, will be on their heads.” In other words, this world’s long-awaited joy, the joy of anticipating that moment, will enable the Jewish people to regain the crowns that are rightfully theirs.

Reb Noson interprets this by explaining how to attain the keter (crown), which symbolizes Hashem’s wisdom, known as the “heh of da’at. This is achieved through simchat olam – the Joy of the world.

First, it involves the joy the Jews experienced while in this world as they worked diligently to fulfill mitzvot with joy. Second, it encompasses the ability to maintain joy even amid the challenges and distractions of the world. Simchat olam reflects the determination to serve Hashem joyfully despite numerous setbacks. It’s essential to clarify that this joy is not about excessive merriment or revelry but rather finding joy in fulfilling mitzvot, even within a world filled with trials and temptations.

It’s essential to understand that you don’t have to remain stuck – there’s always an opening with Hashem!

Reb Noson discusses five major pieces of advice on cultivating happiness.

- The first is to engage in light-heartedness by acting silly and telling jokes. While it may seem nonsensical, this approach allows individuals to release the true joy that is often trapped within the world’s chaos and confusion, which Rebbe Nachman refers to as the

“exchanged chambers.” By laughing at the absurdity of life, individuals can unearth genuine joy, which can then be elevated into true joy through serving Hashem and expressing gratitude.

- The second method is to find joy through dancing, hand clapping, and singing, as music and movement have the power to elevate one’s mood.
- Third, Rebbe Nachman’s Azamra teaching emphasizes identifying and valuing one’s good qualities.
- Fourth, giving thanks for the blessings and kindnesses received is crucial. By recognizing and appreciating these gifts, one can elevate their happiness.
- The fifth and most profound form of joy is having faith in the future, where everything will ultimately work out as part of Hashem’s divine plan. This perspective allows individuals to connect their present experiences to the hopeful future, drawing happiness from what is yet to come.

By incorporating these approaches, Reb Noson’s teachings emphasize the importance of cultivating joy, even in the face of life’s challenges and uncertainties. Reb Noson highlights the profound role that drawing joy from the future plays in achieving salvation in our present lives. It’s essential to understand that you don’t have to remain stuck in your current circumstances. While the present might seem constraining, connecting it to the future and drawing joy from what lies ahead can bring salvation into the present. Reb Noson emphasizes that there’s always an opening with Hashem, a way to transcend your current challenges and find joy.

These five types of joy correspond to the five grains and the heh da’at. This is why Avra’h’am can give birth and Sara’h’ can conceive. Simcha is the key to connecting to Hashem’s da’at, ensuring that food and knowledge work harmoniously to bring people closer to Hashem. This connection is facilitated by the five voices/sounds of joy, namely kol sason, kol

simcha, kol chatan, kol kalah, and kol omrim hodu l'Hashem kitov. Each of these represents different facets of joy, including extreme happiness, dancing and melodious movement, finding joy in the good points, giving thanks for miracles, and expressing gratitude for future rewards.

Amid the current world events and the media's relentless focus on distressing news and images, it's crucial to remember that becoming sad and depressed is not a mitzvah, nor is it the path to a strong Jewish connection. While it's essential to empathize with and feel the pain, one should not remain trapped in it. Pain serves as a catalyst to appreciate joy and light. You must use sadness as a springboard to move forward and embrace happiness.

Rebbe Nachman's teaching in Likutey Moharan, Lesson 24, underscores that the Jews will emerge through joy. Mashiach's arrival is not just a matter of waiting for joy to arrive with him; rather, it is a prerequisite. We are meant to generate joy before Mashiach's arrival.

May we merit the 5-heh kolot/sounds of Avraham, embracing joy, and just as Avraham was promised Yitzchak, may the Jewish people continue to reproduce and bring forth beautiful Jewish souls to fulfill the complete redemption, Amen.

Shabbat Shalom

Meir Elkabas

[*Click here to watch this article as a video*](#)