

LECH LECHA

ABOUT THE STORY OF LECH LECHA

Lech Lecha means “you go out.” The basic teaching behind this story concerns transcendence, where we are helped to go out and escape the bonds of our ego, break free of self-interest, and in the process emancipate ourselves from our illusionary comfort zones. True spiritual Light is only found outside the box we have grown used to living in—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

MICHAEL BERG ON LECH LECHA

The kabbalists teach that every individual has 32,000 possible paths in front of him or her. Amongst those 32,000 paths there is one that is called the *Orach Chaim*, the Path of Life. Many of us, when we look at our spiritual work, need to see that the question isn't are we transforming, doing the spiritual work, or connecting, but rather, how exact and serious are we? I think some of us have an understanding that the spiritual path is a general and relatively vague one; comparing ourselves to where we were years ago, or to other people we know, we can see that we are generally on the right path with transformation and connection, but it is vague.

However, the truth is that it's not like that. There are 32,000 similar paths in front of every single one of us. They are very much alike and look like the right path, what the kabbalists call the *Orach Chaim*, the Path of Life, but they are not. The number 32,000 is not coincidental. If you take the number 32,000, divide it into the years of a person's life, and then divide it into the days, it comes out to approximately two a day; 32,000 divided into approximately 80 years.

Therefore, the teaching here is that every single day of our lives we are given the opportunity, or the

opening, twice a day to veer off just a little bit. So, if every day when those challenges and tests come, we are careful not to veer off, and we go through 32,000 tests in our life, both in this world or in the next world, then we are connected to the Path of Life.

It's not easy to maintain this seriousness and precision about our transformation and our spiritual work, but it's what is necessary in order for us to complete the journey and go consistently down the Path of Life. It is a powerful awakening that we receive from Abraham on Shabbat Lech Lecha.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

Vayera, the next portion in the Zohar, contains an energy that nullifies any negativity blocking our path. We access this Light by working to restrict our physical, short-term desires. This week, focus on seeing the big picture and aligning your desire with that of the Light, which is to share.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.