

## **Lech Lecha 5774**

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This parasha consists of 126 pesukim, but only one positive Mitzvah-namely, Brit-Mila.

It does however contain sources for three well known Minhagim.

### CHUPA UNDER STARS:

When Avraham Avinu expresses his concern that he was already so old that he probably will not have children of his own, HaShem instructs him to go outside his tent under the night star-filled sky and He asks him, “Can you possibly count all the stars? So too will be your descendents, that it will be impossible to count them” (15; 8). This is the source for a Chatan and Kallah to have the wedding Chupa outdoors, to invoke the Divine Beracha of having many children. However, in the event where the couple was older, and not expecting to have any children, the Chupa was done indoors.

### GIFTS AT A BRIT MILAH

Another Minhag stemming from our parasha comes from Avraham Avinu who performed the Mitzvah of Brit Mila. Here the Torah tells us that HaShem gave him the entire Land of Israel. (17:8). An individual person or even a family does not need an entire land. Obviously, Avraham would be the founding father of an entire nation, and the land will belong to that nation. Our Minhag of giving a gift to the ba’alei Simcha at the celebration of a Brit Milah is derived from this Torah narrative. We follow the lead of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, who gave this major gift to Avraham at the occasion of the very first Brit recorded in the Torah, by giving gifts or cash to the ba’alei Simcha.

### NAMING CHILD AT THE BRIT

Our Minhag is to wait with the naming of the boy until the Brit. This is reminiscent of the fact that Avram was given a new name (an additional “hey”) at the time of his Brit.

### ERETZ YISRAEL CHANGES US

Finally, Avraham Avinu had demonstrated the moral conviction and the courage to organize a small army and to wage war against terror when his nephew was taken hostage (14:14). No negotiations and no consultations necessary. The enemy, though greater in number and seemingly more powerful had “crossed the red line”

by taking a Jew into captivity. This was truly an act of bravery and heroism on the part of Avraham.

Yet, just a short while ago when Avram was in Mitzrayim he feared for his life. He felt weak and subdued. Out of desperation he asked Sara to declare that she was his sister for if not the Mitzriyim would surely kill him and take her into house of Par'oh the king (12:12).

What a difference in the same Avram! First he was meek and timid, and then all of a sudden becomes strong, bold and courageous. How did this transformation take place? Answer is, in Mitzrayim Avram was in galut, he behaved like typical Jews in galut; weak, timid and submissive. However, once he entered Eretz Yisrael he was a different Avram; he acted like a Jew with self-confidence, boldness and courage. How true- as we have witnessed this phenomena in our own time. Eretz Yisrael not only gives us wisdom but also strength and courage.