

EREV SHABBOS

12 Cheshvan 5787

Friday • October 23, 2026

CANDLE LIGHTING

6:03 PM

Friday • Vaughan, ON

SHABBOS ENDS

7:03 PM

Vaughan, ON

TORAH READING

Lech Lecha

Bereishis 12:1–17:27

COMING UP

20 Cheshvan

Birthday of the Rebbe Rashab

WHILE THE WORLD BURNS

The riots left the smell of a burning city. Avraham's journey left a fine fragrance.



Masked demonstrators with a Palestinian flag on the statue of the Republic, Place de la République, Paris.

Jack Taylor/Reuters

Masked demonstrators stood on the statue of the Republic in Paris on Shabbos, in the Place de la République, the square where the city's protests rally, burning flares, many waving Palestinian flags. At six in the evening, rioters from outside the neighborhood took over the streets around it, in place of the afternoon marchers. "They organized themselves in groups of 10, with Molotov cocktails," said Rabbi Moyche Cohen, who has run Beth Loubavitch Paris 11 there with his wife Tzipora since 2010. Every car on his street was set on fire during Shabbos. He found his own after Havdalah, its windows smashed and its inside burned out.

That morning, at Chabad of the 3rd Arrondissement, also near République, the community's volunteer security interrupted Kiddush with a warning: République was heating up, though the march was not due until two. Rabbi Meir Shlomo Lubecki sent everyone home. His family ate the Shabbos meal in the Chabad House; at about three they

stepped outside, went back in and locked the doors. No women came to the class at six. Eight men came for Mincha.

After Shabbos the Lubeckis drove home through streets full of young rioters. "Everything on the ground was torched: cars, shops, bicycles," Rabbi Lubecki said. "We ran every single red light." And: "It was as if we had moved to another country."

It was France's most violent unrest in years, and it was not only France. The same weekend crowds were out in Milan, Bologna, Brussels and Lisbon, and in Albania police reportedly fired rubber bullets. In France the protests over the cost of living had spread within weeks from Paris to the small towns across the country. On that Saturday, October 17, more than half a million people joined some 110 marches, by the Interior Ministry's count; the CGT union said 800,000. In Limoges protesters set the city hall on fire. In Lyon they torched the tourist office. In Marseille they broke into the city hall. By Tuesday nearly 2,400 people had been

arrested, and the government estimates that at least 3,000 businesses were looted. On Thursday France banned demonstrations in Paris, Lyon, Lille and Grenoble.

Since October 7, Rabbi Cohen says, nearly every protest in Paris has gathered at République, often under the flags of Hamas and other terror groups. President Macron blamed the far left and looters; online, a Russian bot network had spent six weeks stoking the anger.

On Sunday morning Rabbi Lubecki was back at the Chabad House. The minyan met as usual, and the children came for Talmud Torah. “A regular Sunday morning,” he said, “as if there had been a war the night before, and we just resumed.” Rabbi Cohen called the Jewish-owned stores in the neighborhood, and at one the rioters had broken in and taken everything. He is giving out mezuzos, asking families to have theirs checked, and raising help for the losses insurance will not cover. “Whatever our people need, we are here,” he said. “It’s hashgachah pratit that we’re here, and we will continue to proudly do the Rebbe’s work.”

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This month the protests in France moved from city to city, and wherever they went they left the foul smell of a burning city. In contrast, this Shabbos the Torah reading is Lech Lecha, the story of a journey that left a pleasant fragrance.

Hashem tells Avram: “Go forth from your native land and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you,” and promises him, “I will make of you a great nation,” blessing and a great name. He is not told where he is going.

The Midrash compares Avraham to a flask of balsam oil, sealed tight and set in a corner, whose fragrance went nowhere. Once the flask was moved, the scent spread. So Hashem told Avraham to move from place to place, and his name would become great in the world.

The Rambam tells how the fragrance spread. “He would go out and call to the people, gathering them in city after city and country after country, until he came to the land of Canaan,” he writes, explaining to each one “according to their understanding.” “Ultimately, thousands and myriads gathered around him. These are the men of the house of Abraham.”

He reached the land he had been shown and built an altar near Beis El. Then “There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt.” Rashi says the famine was “in that land only to test him whether he would take exception to God’s commands in that He had bidden him to go to the land of Canaan and now forced him to leave it.” The Midrash:

“When he left [his homeland], famine confronted him, but he did not complain and he did not become indignant.”

The Rebbe asked about this famine in a sicha on Lech Lecha. Avraham passed the test and grew from it. But his journey was meant to make Hashem’s name known wherever he came, and the famine did the opposite: the nations could now say that a Jew who serves Hashem had arrived and brought hunger with him. The famine seemed to defeat the very purpose of lech lecha.

The answer is in how the story ends. “From Egypt, Abram went up into the Negeb, with his wife and all that he possessed, together with Lot. Now Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold.” As the Rebbe put it, “the ‘went down’ was in truth the beginning of the ‘went up.’” The Midrash says that Hashem told Avraham, “Go and pave the way before your descendants,” and that everything written about him is written about his children: he met a famine and went down to Egypt, and so did they. The Rebbe adds that what the Avos did is more than a sign of what will happen to their children; the deed itself brings it about. Avraham’s going down to Egypt led to his children’s exile there, and his going up “very rich in cattle, silver, and gold” led to their going up, as Hashem promised him in this week’s parsha: “and in the end they shall go free with great wealth.” The exile in Egypt was for that from the start, to draw out the sparks of holiness hidden there and to come out with great wealth.

The Rebbe applies this to our own time. “When one considers the state of the world in which one finds oneself, how the darkness grows stronger from day to day,” one could fall into despair and ask, “where does one even get the strength to overpower the darkness and light up the world with the light of Torah and mitzvot?” His answer: “all the descents, concealments and hidings are only something external.” Inwardly it is the reverse. The world does not run by itself; Hashem runs it, and whatever He brings about, even what looks like darkness and decline, is meant to refine the world and raise it. The descent is only a preparation for the ascent, and part of it. So the world grows higher and finer from day to day, until it becomes what it was made to be, a dwelling place for Hashem.

At the covenant between the parts, Hashem promised his children the land of ten nations. Rashi: “Ten nations are listed here, [yet] He gave to them only [the land] of Seven Nations.” The other three, the Keini, the Kenizi and the Kadmoni, are left for the future.

On Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha 5752 the Rebbe said that

ours is the last generation of the exile and the first of the redemption, and that the time has come to prepare in practice for lech lecha “to the land that I will show you,” immediately, and to receive the land in its completeness, all ten lands. “And what will be new now: we will receive the three lands in ways of pleasantness and in ways of peace, because at that time (in the days of Moshiach) there will be no ... war ... but the nations of the world will themselves give them to the Jews, of their own good will.”

Only a prophet can speak that way while the world is burning. The Rambam writes that a prophet’s warnings of famine or war may not come to pass, because Hashem

forgives those who return to Him, but his promises of good never fail: “Any good which God decrees - even if [the decree] is provisional - will never be nullified.”

May we see it now: an end to the horror and the violence, to the burning streets and the hatred carried through them, in Paris and in every city of the world, and the redemption the Rebbe promised, with the nations themselves giving Avraham’s children what was promised to him, as the prophet says: “לֹא-יִשְׁמַע עוֹד קוֹל בְּאַרְצֶךָ עַד וְשָׁכַר בְּגְבוּלֶיךָ,” violence shall no more be heard in your land, nor devastation and destruction within your borders.



A masked protester with a Palestinian flag beside a burning bus stop, Place de la République, Paris. Guy Smallman/Getty Images

SOURCES

Bereishis 12:1–2, 12:8, 12:10, 13:1–2, 15:14, 15:18–21 · Rashi on Bereishis 12:10, 15:19 · Bereishis Rabbah 39:2, 40:2, 40:6 · Rambam, Hilchos Avodah Zarah 1:3; Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 10:4 · Likkutei Sichos vol. 5, Lech Lecha 1 · Sefer HaSichos 5752 vol. 1, Shabbos Lech Lecha · Yeshayahu 60:18. Chabad.org, October 20, 2026 · Times of Israel (Reuters), October 18, 2026 · Times of Israel (AP), October 22, 2026.

CHESHVAN 5787

THIS SHABBOS

13 Cheshvan · Oct 24 Shabbos Lech Lecha

NEXT SHABBOS

20 Cheshvan · Oct 31 Birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, Shabbos Vayeira

COMING UP

27 Cheshvan · Nov 7 Shabbos Chayei Sarah, Mevarchim Kislev

DAILY RAMBAM · SHABBOS LECH LECHA

Shabbos, 13 Cheshvan · Day 264. Sefer HaMitzvos: positive commandment 245, the law of buying and selling. Three chapters: Mechirah 4–6. One chapter: Issurei Biah 5.

Positive Commandment 245. We are commanded in the laws of buying and selling: the ways a sale takes effect between seller and buyer. The Sages learned them from the verse “When you sell something to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor’s hand” (Vayikra 25:14), and taught that a thing is acquired “from hand to hand,” by *meshichah*, drawing it toward you. By Torah law it is the payment that acquires movable goods; *meshichah*, and likewise handing over and lifting, are enactments of the Sages, made for the buyer just as they were made for one who takes an object into his keeping. Land is acquired by other ways as well, a deed or an act of possession, which the Sages tied to verses. The details of how each kind of property is acquired are set out in Kiddushin, Bava Metzia and Bava Basra.