

LAMPLIGHTER

22 Sivan
Parshas Shelach
Shabbos Mevorchim

1300
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The Holy Tourist

by Elisha Greenbaum

Backpacking Europe with a friend, we were embarrassed by the behavior of the tour groups with whom we would occasionally cross paths.

No, I'm not talking drunken soccer hooligans on the rampage. True, they were irritating, but this was worse. Lager louts may act in a herd-like fashion, drinking and fighting en masse, but they do exhibit some degree of autonomy through those tiny minds.

What provoked our outrage and disdain were the organized tour groups. Dressed identically, even down to those annoying fluorescent hats, decanted off and on those gargantuan buses at the will of their guide, clustering into overpriced tourist traps to buy identical teaspoon sets, postcards and other useless merchandise—we wondered why they bothered coming at all.

If you insist on eating at the same fast-food franchises as back home, hang out all day with the same crowd, and make no serious attempt to savor authentic local culture, then why not stay home, save your money, and illustrate your photo album with pictures of yourself digitally superimposed standing in front of foreign attractions?

We were different. We weren't "tourists" or "sightseers"; we were backpackers. We stayed in fleabag motels and refused to let ourselves be ordered around by any guidebook. We got our pockets picked in Venice, accepted Shabbat invitations from strangers, wore out our shoe leather on the cobblestones of Paris, and came back with a far more complex appreciation and understanding of other peoples and cultures than had we done our traveling from the sterile comforts of an air-conditioned tourist bus. Or so we believed.

We read this week of the tragedy that befell the Jews after they believed the report of ten of the spies. The spies returned from their travels with wild tales about the impregnability of the Land of Canaan and the inevitable danger involved in leaving the desert and entering the Land. After the Jews spent an evening crying, complaining and bemoaning their fate, G-d punished them by decreeing that they would not be taken directly to the Promised Land as first planned, but remain an extra forty years in the

desert.

When Moses had first spoken about sending agents to discover the best way to conquer the land, he didn't speak about "spies"; he spoke of "tourists." A spy needs to be constantly on the alert, plotting and scheming how best to obtain information, forward it back to base, and use it in the most effective manner. Tourists, by contrast, seem to float serenely over the surface of the land, unaffected and untouched by anything they see or anyone they contact.

On the face of it, by abandoning their touring mission and becoming spies, these men were in a position to render far more useful a service to their compatriots waiting for them back in the desert. Moses had instructed them to return with factual information, such as the location and size of the cities to be captured, the relative strength of their defenses, the character of the inhabitants and the productivity of the soil. The kind of stuff that could have been discovered by reading the local equivalent of Lonely Planet or Let's Go Canaan. Of their own volition they became spies. They quantified the capacity of the enemy to resist, and compared that with the resources the Israelites had available. They did a cost-benefit analysis of the profits of invasion against the risks, and independently decided that they'd be better off in the desert.

This was their mistake. Moses hadn't asked them to spy, because we didn't need to know if the task was achievable. G-d had told us to go in and conquer, and by definition we expected to be successful. Moses' only concern was how best to achieve G-d's desired outcome. By interfering with Moses' direct demand and contaminating the process with their own wishes and perspectives, they

caused disaster.

When my friend and I backpacked Europe, we prided ourselves on our autonomy and ability to choose our path through life, and mostly this type of independence is commendable. There are times however, when we are better off "staying above it all," doing what we are told and living up to G-d's plan.

When we are operating under direct instruction, whether written in the Torah or educated thus by a prophet, artificially interjecting our own independent likes, dislikes and desires is foolhardy, and will probably lead to years spent wondering and wandering through a barren desert of lost opportunities.



CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES FOR SHABBOS 16- 17 JUNE 23 SIVAN

City	In	Out	City	In	Out	City	In	Out	City	In	Out
Melbourne	4:49	5:51	Brisbane	4:43	5:39	Gold Coast	4:40	5:36	Sydney	4:35	5:34
Adelaide	4:53	5:52	Darwin	6:11	7:04	Perth	5:01	5:59	Canberra	4:40	5:39
Byron bay	4:38	5:34	Auckland	4:53	5:54	Wellington	4:40	5:44	Hobart	4:24	5:30

Slice of LIFE

The Seventh Year

by Dov Weiss

My name is Dov Weiss, and I was one of a group of about thirty young men who started the moshav (agricultural settlement) of Komemiyut, in the south of Israel. It was in 1950, after we had completed our army service. I was still a bachelor then. Among the founders was also the well-known Torah scholar and rabbinical authority, Rabbi Binyamin Mendelson, of blessed memory. He had previously immigrated to Israel from Poland, and had served as the rabbi of Kfar Ata.

At first we lived in tents, in the middle of a barren wilderness. The nearest settlements to ours were several kibbutzim associated with the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair movement: Gat, Gilon and Negba. Several of our members supported themselves by working at Kibbutz Gat, the closest to us, doing different types of manual labor. Others worked in our fields, planting wheat, barley, rye, and other grains and legumes. I myself drove a tractor. Our produce, which grew throughout the 15,000 or so dunams (nearly 4000 acres) allotted us, we sold to bakeries and factories.

At that time, there were not yet water pipes reaching our moshav. We had to content ourselves with what could be grown in dry, rugged fields. Every few days we would make a trip to Kibbutz Negba, about 20 kilometers distant, to fill large containers with drinking water.

The second year we were there, 5712 on the Jewish calendar (1951–52), was the Shemittah year, which comes every seventh year, in which the Torah commands to desist from all agricultural work. We were among the very few settlements in Israel at the time to observe the laws of the Sabbatical year and refrain from working the land. Instead we concentrated on building, and succeeded that year in completing much of the permanent housing. The moshav gradually developed and expanded, and more and more families moved in, as well as a number of young singles. By the end of the year we numbered around eighty people.

As the Sabbatical year drew to its completion, we prepared to renew our farming activities. For this we required seed to sow crops, but for this purpose we could use only wheat from the sixth year, the year that preceded the Shemittah, for the produce of the seventh year is forbidden for this type of use. We went around to all the agricultural settlements in the area, near and far, seeking good quality seed from the previous years' harvest, but no one could fulfill our request.

All we were able to find was some old wormy seed that, for reasons that were never made clear to us, was lying around in a storage shed in Kibbutz Gat. No farmer in his right mind anywhere in the world would consider using such poor quality seed to plant with, not if he expected to see any crops from it. The kibbutzniks at Gat all burst into loud derisive laughter when we revealed that we were actually interested in this infested grain that had been rotting away for a few years in some dark, murky corner.

"If you really want it, you can take all that you like, and for free, with our compliments," they offered in amusement.

We consulted with Rabbi Mendelson. His response was: "Take it. The One who tells wheat to sprout from good seed can also order it to grow from inferior wormy leftover seed as well."

In any case, we didn't have an alternative. So we loaded all the old infested seed that the kibbutz had offered to us free of charge onto a tractor, and returned to Komemiyut.

The laws of Shemittah forbade us to plow and turn over the soil till after Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the eighth year, so we didn't actually sow the seed until sometime in November. This was two or three months after all the other farmers had already completed their planting.

That year, the rains were late in coming. The farmers from all the kibbutzim and moshavot gazed upward longingly for the first rain. They began to feel desperate, but the heavens were unresponsive, remaining breathlessly still and blue.

Finally it rained. When? The day after we completed planting our thousand dunams of wheat fields with those wormy seeds, the sky opened up and the rains exploded down to saturate the parched earth.

The following days we were nervous in anticipation, but we turned our attention to strengthening our faith and trust in G-d. Anyway, it did not take a long time for the hand of the Almighty to be revealed clearly to all. Those wheat fields that were planted during the seventh year, months before the first rain, sprouted only small and weak crops. At the same time, our fields, sowed with the old infested seed and long after the appropriate season, were covered with an unusually large and healthy yield of wheat, in comparison to

any standard.

The story of "the miracle at Komemiyut" spread quickly. Farmers from all the agricultural settlements in the region came to see with their own eyes what they could not believe when they heard the rumors about it.

When the farmers from Kibbutz Gat arrived, they pulled a surprise on us. After absorbing the sight of the bountiful quantity of wheat flourishing in our fields, they announced they wanted payment for the tractor-load of old rotten wheat they had scornfully given us for free only a short time before.

Even more startling: they said they would file a claim against us at a beit din, a rabbinical court, and with Rabbi Mendelson himself, no less! They must have figured that in a secular court, such a claim wouldn't have even the slightest possible chance of gaining them a single penny.

Rabbi Mendelson accepted their case seriously, and in the end judged that we should pay them. He explained that the reason they gave it for free was because they thought it worthless for planting, while in truth it really was excellent for that purpose. We were astonished to hear his ruling, but needless to say, we complied.

The whole story became an extraordinary kiddush Hashem (glorification of G-d) in the eyes of Jews across the country. Everyone agreed it was a clear fulfillment of G-d's promise in the Torah (Leviticus 25):

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruit. But in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath for G-d . . .

If you shall say: "What shall we eat in the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our produce!" I will command My blessing upon you . . .

Editor's note:

Today, Komemiyut is world-famous for its high-quality *shmurah matzah* (lit. "matzah that has been watched")—round, handmade matzah prepared under exacting supervision from the time the wheat is harvested through the end of the baking to guard against the minutest moisture.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Moon Landing and Torah

I received your letter of April 24th, in which you write about the apparent contradiction between the latest scientific attempts to penetrate outer space, especially reaching the moon, which seems to you to contradict the statement in the Torah, "The Heavens belong to G-d, and the earth He gave to the children of man."

Actually there is no contradiction at all, if you consider the term "earth" not in the narrow sense referring only to our globe, but in its proper sense, as meant in this verse, which includes also the atmosphere and the whole physical universe, with which mankind is concerned and directly affected by. We must not confuse the terms Heaven and the planets. The stars, planets, moon, etc. are not called Heaven, since Heaven is something spiritual, whereas those planets are physical and belong in the physical universe.

The fact that G-d created the so-called heavenly bodies to serve our world, and to give light, warmth, and energy to it, and placed them in the firmament of the sky at a certain distance from our earth, does not preclude man's attempt to learn all about them. Similarly, when the Torah states that G-d placed the moon in the sky so to give light on earth, this does not exclude the possibility of man's landing on it at some future time. The meaning of the verse "the Heavens belong to G-d, etc.," is in the sense that while G-d is everywhere, including the Heavens, man was placed in the physical universe, and is part of it, and, therefore, must make the most of it, as long as there is life on this earth. There is nothing in actual scientific experiments and accomplishments that contradict the Torah, nor is there such a possibility since the Torah is Truth.

Judging by your writing and background, I firmly hope that you are conducting your daily life in strict accordance with the Torah, which is called Toras Chaim, the Law of Life, and the Mitzvahs whereby Jews live, and that you attempt to make steady advancement along this road, in compliance with the principle that "all things of holiness should be on the upgrade."

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Is The Torah Age Restricted?

Question: I have a three-year-old who is quite bright. I try to read to her and teach her as much as I can about stories from the Torah, but recently it's become increasingly difficult. It seems like every story in the Torah needs to be edited for children. I find myself confused all the time with what I am supposed to teach her. Adam and Eve sinning and being thrown out of the Garden of Eden, G-d destroying the world with a flood, the Ten Plagues visited on the Egyptians. Should the Torah be rated PG?

Answer: It's funny: all these stories you mention, kids have absolutely no problem with them. It's we adults who have the issues. We have become morally queasy. But our kids need moral clarity.

Adam and Eve did what they were told not to, and they were punished. The generation of the flood was corrupt and was destroyed. The Egyptians who threw Jewish babies into the Nile were punished, after ignoring one warning after another, with the horrible plagues. The message is unmistakable: evil catches up with you. You can get away with it for a while, but not forever. A three-year-old gets that.

Now, of course, the world is not all black and white, people are not all good or all evil, and not every choice is between absolute right and wrong. Life is full of gray areas, nuances and subtleties, and in most moral dilemmas the lines are not so clearcut. But subtlety is for adults. A child needs the security of seeing things in black and white. Rules have to be plainly expressed; borders have to be sharply defined. Good is good and will be rewarded. Bad is bad and will be punished. Children struggle when things are vague and wishy-washy. They thrive on clarity.

We as parents need to be unequivocal about what is right and wrong, and the consequences of choosing the right way or the wrong way. This is the most important lesson you can teach your child. And that is the theme of the entire Torah. In a world of moral equivalence, this message needs to be communicated loud and clear.

Your child has an inner moral compass, but you need to help her cultivate it. Develop her sense of good and evil, and she will grow to be a morally healthy adult, PG (please G-d).

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat we read the Torah portion of Shelach, in which we learn about the spies who Moshe sent to explore the land of Israel before the Jews would enter it. This was not a commandment from G-d, but a choice left to Moshe's discretion. We learn this from the words of the Torah portion, "shelach lecha - send for you," according to your own discretion.

The Rebbe explains that the spies' mission described in the Torah portion can be compared to the soul's descent into the material world.

The mission of a Jewish soul is to descend into this world enclotted in a physical body in order to make this world a dwelling place for G-d. In order for the soul to fulfill its mission, it must "explore the land," to figure out the nature of the service that must be carried out and which conflicts and difficulties will arise, and what is the best way to transform the land into a dwelling for G-d.

This mission, like the sending of the spies, is left up to man's discretion. Indeed, G-d allows for the possibility of an error in both cases, because in order to make this world into a dwelling place for G-d, a person must act upon his or her own initiative, based on his or her own decision.

The act of the spiritual soul coming down to this physical world and elevating it to a higher spiritual plane by making it a dwelling place for G-d is the perfect synthesis of material and spiritual. We recently celebrated the holiday of Shavuot, in which we commemorate the giving of the Torah. The act of bringing the very holy Torah into this world made it possible to fuse together the spiritual and the physical. May we imminently experience the ultimate fusion of the two in the Messianic Era.

J. I. Gutnick

Here's my *Story*

Personal Encounters
 With The Rebbe. Culled From JEM's
 'My Encounter' Project by David Mintz

In the late 1970s, I asked the Rebbe for a bracha to open a kosher restaurant, Mintz's Buffet, on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. At the time there was nothing glatt kosher there. They only had "kosher style." The only real kosher place was Meal Mart on the West Side, and aside from that, there was nowhere an observant Jew could eat.

The Rebbe gave me a beautiful bracha. He emphasized that I would succeed if I was very careful with the kosher products I used.

When I first opened and people saw the glatt kosher sign and then saw that I was wearing a kippa, they said, "Young man, you're wasting your time and money in this place. You belong on the Lower East Side." But I said, "I appreciate your interest and advice but the success of the business depends on G-d." dairy



The restaurant became a huge success. I did a lot of take-out and a lot of catering. People would often ask me for ice cream, to which I would reply, "The food is fleishig, so in the same meal we can't have ice cream." They said, "Okay, then we'll buy our own ice cream."

That's when the seeds were planted in my head. I started to do research and finally decided to make non-dairy parve ice cream which I could sell with a fleishig meal. I read an article about tofu. I didn't even know what tofu was at the time, and I went to Chinatown to buy it.

I started experimenting with it but at first I had little success and whatever I made, I had to throw out. During this time, whenever I met with the Rebbe I would mention what I was doing, and he would say to me, "You have to have faith. If you have faith in G-d, you can do wonders." So I kept trying. Meanwhile, my restaurant business expanded. I now had a Mintz's Buffet on 3rd Avenue in Manhattan and another one in Flatbush, Brooklyn. And then an opportunity came up to open on Madison Avenue. I asked the Rebbe if I should do it, and his answer was "Be careful." I didn't understand what that meant. It was Madison Avenue and it was such an opportunity. I opened there, but I was not successful. The local clientele was wrong for my sort of business. And then my 3rd Avenue restaurant had to close because Donald Trump bought out the whole square block and razed all the buildings.

That is when Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, founder of the Lincoln Square Synagogue on the Upper West Side, came to me. He said, "I understand that you have to leave your location because of Donald Trump. Why don't you come to us – we want you here on the West Side. Open up a Mintz's Buffet and we will support you totally. My whole congregation will come to you."

I was very excited about that, especially when a friend of Rabbi Riskin found me the perfect location at 72nd and Broadway. What an opportunity! As always, I asked the Rebbe's advice and I immediately got an

answer. It was the same day, a few hours later, that the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner called up, and he said, "Listen carefully. Get a pencil and paper and write it down. This is very important." I was very excited. This was the answer I was waiting for.

Then he dictated to me, "The Rebbe says, 'Absolutely not. B'Shum oiften nisht. Absolutely not. B'Shum oiften nisht.'" Twice he said that.

I was taken aback. I said, "Why is the Rebbe saying absolutely not?" Rabbi Groner said, "The Rebbe says you should continue with your experiments with the parve ice cream and G-d will help you to be very successful. And your products will become so popular and so in demand that they'll be sold all over the world."

It sounded like a fantasy. Meanwhile, I felt like I was losing a golden opportunity at 72nd and Broadway...

But I listened to the Rebbe. For me it was not even an option. Somebody else seized that opportunity and it proved nothing but trouble – trouble with the building department, trouble with the health department – the man never really managed to open up despite the enormous expenses that went into it.

I decided to go into experimentation full time. I sold the Brooklyn restaurant because the neighborhood had changed and I committed to making this parve ice cream from tofu – first I called it Tofu Time, and later Tofutti.

By 1981 I was distributing samples. Then I got my first break. There was a health food store in Manhattan called Health Nuts and the owner called me. He said, "I heard people talking about a product you are making – tofu ice cream. I'd like to try it."

I brought him a five-gallon pail. No sooner had I returned from Manhattan to Brooklyn there was a call from this guy from Health Nuts: "Mr. Mintz, Mr. Mintz, you've got to bring me more. Please bring me more." He was my first big customer and then came Zabbar's, the epitome of gourmet shops in New York. After that Bloomingdale's called. They ended up giving it out as people came into the store and selling it in their cafeteria.

Now I knew I couldn't make enough of the stuff in the small place where I was working. I had to go commercial – to take it to the next level.

Again, I went to the Rebbe and I said, "Please give me a bracha. I found a factory that wants to make it." The Rebbe said, "It will be difficult in the beginning, but you have to have faith in G-d."

And it was difficult. In my lab in Brooklyn we made the stuff in little kettles. In the factory, the pots were a hundred or two hundred gallons. I had to reformulate. But I succeeded and Tofutti took off. Eventually, we were producing almost ten thousand gallons of Tofutti a week in cooperation with Wells Farms.

At this time, the Rebbe told me, "People will come and they'll offer you all kinds of money. Don't be swayed by their offers and be very careful. Just keep on doing what you are doing."

When that did happen, I followed his advice. But after a time I asked him if I should take the company public. It was a privately held company and I thought it would be profitable to have it traded on the stock exchange. The Rebbe's response was: "That's a very good thought."

And that's what I did. This move put Tofutti on the map, so that we were working with the largest companies like Haagen Dazs and others. And it was all because the Rebbe gave me a blessing that I should be successful, and because his guidance saved me each and every time.

David Mintz, a New York restaurateur, is the founder of the Tofutti company, makers of non-dairy ice cream. He was interviewed in his home in Alpine, New Jersey in February, 2007.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS SHELACH SHABBOS MEVORCHIM • 22 SIVAN • 16 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING: 4.49 PM	
	MINCHA: 4.55 PM	
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS: 5.25 PM	
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: 9.47 AM	
	TEHILLIM: 8.00 AM	
	SHACHARIS: 10.00 AM	
	MINCHA: 4.45 PM	
	THE MOLAD FOR TAMUZ IS ON SHABBOS 9.16 (13 chalakim)	
	AM FARBRENGEN FOLLOWING DAVENING	
	SHABBOS ENDS: 5.51 PM	
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: 8.00/9.15/10.00 AM	
	MINCHA: 4.55 PM	
	MAARIV: 5.40 PM	

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Moses sends twelve spies to the land of Canaan. Forty days later they return, carrying a huge cluster of grapes, a pomegranate and a fig, to report on a lush and bountiful land. But ten of the spies warn that the inhabitants of the land are giants and warriors "more powerful than we"; only Caleb and Joshua insist that the land can be conquered, as G-d has commanded.

The people weep that they'd rather return to Egypt. G-d decrees that Israel's entry into the Land shall be delayed forty years, during which time that entire generation will die out in the desert. A group of remorseful Jews storm the mountain on the border of the Land, and are routed by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

The laws of the menachot (meal, wine and oil offerings) are given, as well as the mitzvah to consecrate a portion of the dough (challah) to G-d when making bread. A man violates the Shabbat by gathering sticks, and is put to death. G-d instructs to place fringes (tzitzit) on the four corners of our garments, so that we should remember to fulfill the mitzvot (divine commandments)