

LAMPLIGHTER

25 Sivan
Parshas
Shlach
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Shlach, we read that Moses sent spies to the Land of Israel in order to get a report on the conditions there. The spies returned with the gloomy news: "The people dwelling in the land are strong, the cities are very strongly walled and great, and we also saw the children of giants there." The spies were harshly punished by G-d for their message, and the Torah describes them as having "brought an evil report against the land."

Why were they punished at all? Were they not merely fulfilling their mission? Their job was to check out the land, "What it is, and whether the people dwelling in it are strong...the cities, if they are open places or fortified," and this is what they did. Is it their fault that the land was occupied by giants and the cities were reinforced? Should they have given a false report upon their return?

The true sin of the spies was that they digressed from their mission. They were only required to describe the Land of Israel, in order for the Jews to know how best to approach and conquer it in a natural manner. The spies were not satisfied with a mere description; they had to editorialize as well and added their opinion as to the likelihood of it being conquered. When they added their own deductions, this caused the Children of Israel to lose faith in G-d and begin to despair. The sin of the twelve spies lies in their comment, "We will not be able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than us."

The spies' transgression was that their faith in G-d's commandment was not great enough. When G-d commands that something be done, a Jew must have faith that it is possible. G-d does not require anything of man which is above his capabilities. Even a mortal, possessing the minimum of understanding and responsibility, will not ask a person to do something which is impossible. Every artisan who fashions a vessel creates it so that it will fulfill its purpose and not break. How much more so is this true about G-d. When the King of Kings commands us to do something, there is no doubt that it is within our grasp, or else it would not have been commanded.

However, we must remember that although man must be sure of his ability to perform mitzvot (commandments), he must not rely on miracles to accomplish them. Indeed, mitzvot must be done through natural means, as this is the will of G-d. A Jew must find the best way according to the laws of nature, to succeed in his tasks. That is why Moses sent the spies; to discover the best approach to conquer Israel militarily. The sin of the spies was that they put all their faith in nature itself, and forgot Who created that very nature.

Mission Possible

By Naftali Silberberg

A story: Rabbi Hirsh Altein suffered tremendous back pains, and after unsuccessfully trying many medications and treatments all the specialists he visited advised him that surgery was the only way to rid himself of the problem. When the Rebbe was asked for advice, he implied that surgery was unnecessary; there must be a cream on the market which could solve the problem! But the doctors continued to insist that they know of no alternative to surgery.

As a last resort, Rabbi Altein visited Dr. Avrohom Seligson (the Rebbe's personal doctor, and a devoted chassid). Dr. Seligson, who was not a back specialist, checked Rabbi Altein and prescribed an ointment for his back. Sure enough, until his passing more than twenty years later, Rabbi Altein never had a recurrence of his back pains.

When Dr. Seligson was asked how he knew to prescribe the particular cream, when all the specialists thought that surgery was the only option, he responded: "The results of the check-up indicated that he needed surgery—but the Rebbe said that this wasn't the case. I realized that the Rebbe merely wanted a 'vessel' through which a miracle could be manifest, so I prescribed the simplest and cheapest cream available on the market!"

The spies' reconnaissance mission to Canaan was intended to gather intelligence information about the enemy. They were told to scout the lay of the land, as well as its natural and man-made fortifications. They were to report on the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, and the natural resources they could rely on during times of battle. This information would be used by the Israelite military brass to formulate an appropriate combat strategy for the impending battle to conquer the Holy Land.

The spies – all of whom were upright and pious people with unquestionable integrity – faithfully went about their task, but what they saw made their stomachs churn: the Canaanites were a powerful nation, gargantuan people with awesome strength. No fewer than 31 kings had royal palaces defended by military contingents on the Canaan mainland. There was no way, the spies concluded, for the Israelites to achieve a natural victory against the formidable Canaanite foe. "We are unable to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we," they declared! Yet this honest conclusion had disastrous results. G-d was highly displeased with their report and the reaction it engendered, and it caused the premature demise of the entire generation which left Egypt.

Where did the spies go wrong? Can you tell someone to bring back a report and then punish him because the report isn't to your liking? Isn't that an example of shooting the messenger because you don't care for the message?

The Rebbe explains that the spies erred in assuming that they had to reach a conclusion. They were told to go to Canaan and bring back dry facts: the nature of the land and its population etc. They were not asked to render a decision regarding the feasibility of conquering the land. G-d had promised the Jews a military victory against the Canaanites, and therefore that was not a debatable issue. The question wasn't if it could be done, but rather how it would be done.

The same is true with our personal lives. We all are "sent on a mission" to this world, to illuminate our surroundings with the radiance of Torah and mitzvot. Often the opposition seems to be too formidable; the obstacles to implementing G-d's appear to be insurmountable. When these thoughts enter our minds we must remember that if G-d charged us with the mission it certainly can be carried out. Our job is only to figure out how to do it.

Slice of LIFE

Last Chapters

By Baila Olidort

Several months ago I volunteered to spend the night in the hospital with a woman on a respirator, in a palliative care unit awkwardly named "Step Down" for patients who, at least medically, it seemed to me, have nowhere to go but "down." It was a call I received from one of the area's Bikur Cholim groups [volunteer organizations devoted to aiding the ill and their families]. The woman's husband refused to leave his wife alone, they explained, and he has collapsed several times from sheer exhaustion. She's been comatose for four months now, and they were looking for people to relieve him.

I said yes immediately, afraid that if I thought about it first, I would lose the courage. The idea of sharing a whole night with someone straddling two worlds seemed awesome to me, so much so that I barely slept the night before, as I lay awake considering this woman and her soul.

Feeling tremendous compassion for the patient, I came to the hospital naively determined to reach her, and coax her to consciousness, if only for a moment. At her bedside, I read the day's Tanya and recited some Psalms, imagining that the Hebrew letters and the words they form will mysteriously nudge her out of her coma. I brought a charity box and placed it near her bed,

and in the early hours of the morning, put in some tzedaka (charity) - a mitzva said to have life-saving potential.

We do not, of course, know with any certainty what transpires in the mind or soul of the human being in the absence of normal consciousness. What appears a pointless last chapter of life, may - if not rushed to premature conclusion - be its most redeeming episode. Because while in a coma, the soul may yet do teshuva (repent) and reach fulfillment - a possibility that is decidedly lost once the soul finally departs the body.

But my direct encounter with this situation forced certain realizations upon me, and I began to wonder about the absolute views of halacha (Jewish Law) on life-extending measures. Is the view that promotes the extension of even one additional moment of life, in its broadest definition, perhaps simplistic, and oblivious to the nuances in cases where all essential life has ebbed?

I was startled to find the patient with her eyes wide open and moving. "Just reflexes," the nurse said to me casually. I peered closely into her vacant eyes wishing to elicit a fleeting sign of the vitality that once animated them. Alas, her spirit or soul, which I had imagined would be more perceptible in the face of a waning physical existence, eluded me entirely.

I wondered at the sustained effort devoted to groom so lifeless a body over so long a stretch of time. Every two hours she is turned to prevent bedsores. She is fed through intravenous tubes and

must be suctioned regularly. Her bodily functions are now managed by paid nurses. Once the master of her dignity, she would have recoiled in horror, I thought, to know that when she is no longer here-when all that defined her as a distinct human being is no more, her body would not only be allowed to languish, but be cajoled into languishing in an unnatural condition. And I felt deep sadness, convinced that she would not have wanted her body so exhaustively manipulated to keep her tethered to the netherworld of limbo.

So, for the first time I considered with more regard the argument against excessive measures to prolong life where essentially, it is over. It was no longer inconceivable to me that someone anticipating such an end would stipulate against life-extending intervention. And for the first time I realized that family members rejecting this kind of intervention are not necessarily selfish or callous, but may be sincerely motivated by concern for the patient and the desire to dignify their loved one.

Last week, I received another call from the soft-spoken woman at the Bikur Cholim. I wasn't sure what I'd say if asked to give another night, or even just a few hours. The experience was exhausting and seemed almost pointless.

But the lady from the Bikur Cholim wasn't calling to ask me for anything. At the request of the patient's husband, she was contacting the people who had given time, to thank them again and to let them know that the patient had emerged from her coma.

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Dating by Starlight

B"H, 1 Sivan, 5716

Peace and blessing!

In response to your letter from the 25th of Iyar: I was happy to read in it that many of your doubts have vanished. Our holy books explain that Safek – doubt – has the same numerical equivalent as Amalek. The intent is to the Kelipa of Amalek — the spiritual force of impurity that the nation of Amalek represented. Just like the people themselves, this force embodies the trait of jumping into even a boiling bath, just so long as it manages to cool the ardour the Jewish people. The same is true of all of your doubts — their source is clearly in the influence of Amalek.

You wrote that you read in astronomy books that there are stars whose light rays must travel far more than six thousand years until reaching Earth. How, you asked, could that fit with our holy Torah's position that we are in the year 5716 since Creation?

Even if you were to assume that the above-mentioned calculation about the star's distance is correct (since that, too, is a subject of dissent among scientists), it does not pose a difficulty regarding the age of the universe. Just as stars were created, light rays were also created. And just as G-d could create a star that begins to shine only after its creation, so could He create a star that already has rays of light shining forth from it. Especially since Torah tells us, "there was morning, the first day," even though "Let there be luminaries" was only uttered on the fourth day; i.e. there was light even before the luminaries were set in the heavens.

You write that you saw in some book that possibly the six days of creation did not consist of twenty-four hour days, etc. etc. To our sorrow, similar interpretations are offered in several books. However, they distort the verses, because — with forgiveness asked from the honor of their Torah — they did not properly understand the "foundations" upon which the various scientific theories about the world's age are built. Any knowledge or research into these foundations proves to any healthy mind that they are only conjectures, very far from certainties. This is the scientists' opinion, as is clearly stated in their books. It is just that in the books generally studied in schools by beginners, they conceal their many doubts and uncertainties in the underlying assumptions.

And while there is no need to delve into this at length, the simplest proof that the six days of creation are twenty-four hour days is the fact that the concept of keeping Shabbat after six week days is connected to G-d's resting after the six days of creation.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Should I Buy a Burial Plot?

Question: Many of my friends who are in their 70s are making arrangements for their Jewish burials, so that the burden won't fall on their children. Is this appropriate? Or are we to simply leave our final requests in writing for our family when we are no longer in this world?

Answer: You know the story of the charming husband who bought his wife a burial plot for her birthday? The next year he didn't buy her anything. When she asked why, he responded, "I bought you a gift last year, and you didn't use it."

It's a horrible joke. But even bad jokes have some truth to them. The sages of the Midrash advise us to purchase a burial plot even while we are still alive and well. And it is commonly said that doing so will actually bless one with a long life. So this guy's wife should be blessed with good health for many years to come.

Although some write that this blessing does not appear to be written in any classical Jewish source, it is possible to explain it psychologically. The fear of dying, like the fear of anything, saps our energy. Buying a burial plot may help normalize death, which will prevent us from becoming preoccupied with it.

Another suggested explanation: It is ordained in heaven how much income each person makes in a year. This includes the burial society—a certain amount of money will come to them each year. Unfortunately, they make a living from people dying. So there needs to be a certain number of funerals each year. But if you pay your funeral costs in advance, then they get the money that is coming to them, and you can live on.

Death is an unpleasant topic, but we all have to face it. Our emphasis should always be on life, not its opposite. But on occasion, a gentle reminder of our mortality can motivate us to use our time wisely. May we all live for many years, and may those years be filled with meaningful days.

A WORD

from the Director

The 28th of the Hebrew month of Sivan (coinciding with June 11 this year) is the anniversary of the arrival in the United States of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin.

Twenty-eight in Hebrew letters spells Ko-ach, meaning "strength." The Rebbe explained this means that strength and permanence are contributed to the entire day, and this in turn gives strength to every Jew to carry out his preparation for the ultimate redemption.

The Rebbe went on to explain that it was in "770" (Eastern Parkway) that the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus, the prerequisite to Moshiach's revelation, reached its most complete expression.

He referred to 770 using the Talmudic term "Beit Rabbeinu Shebebabel" meaning literally "the house of our Master in Babylonia" that our Sages refer to as the location of the Temple in exile, so to speak.

"Not coincidentally," explained the Rebbe, "770 has the numerical value of the Hebrew word 'poratzta' meaning 'and you shall spread forth.' And it is from 770, explained the Rebbe, that the first revelation of the Third Holy Temple will take place, encompassing the entire building from its lowest levels until its rooftop.

"The rooftop is the place where Moshiach stands and announces, 'Humble ones, the time for your redemption has come.' The rooftop of the Holy Temple," continued the Rebbe, "refers to the miniature sanctuary of the Diaspora which represents the Holy Temple of Jerusalem."

It is also not coincidental, the Rebbe pointed out, that "770" is the numerical value of "Beis Moshiach" - the House of Moshiach.

May we all go together with the Rebbe and 770 and all the miniature sanctuaries - every shul and every Jewish home, for that matter - to the actual site of the Third Holy Temple in Jerusalem, now.

J. I. Gutterman

IT HAPPENED



Behind the Silver

By Tuvia Bolton

Once there was a poor man named Avraham. He, and his wife and six children lived a meager life in a small wooden hut at the end of the road. Often there was no more than bread and tea to eat, but there was always room at his table and in his heart for guests.

One day a very holy looking Jew appeared at his door and asked if he could enter. "Avraham," the guest said, "you don't know me but I know you. Your kindness is remarkable and I am going to give you a blessing for wealth... Just don't let it go to your head. Keep your heart open to the poor and unfortunate.

Avraham promised, and the mysterious man blessed him and left. A week later Avraham found a box filled with golden coins. He invested the money made a lot of right decisions and a month later found himself am rich man surrounded by other wealthy men. He bought out factories, advised investors purchased a big mansion for himself... In short, in a half a year he was a big wheel and completely forgot his promise to worry for the unfortunate, he was simply too busy.

After a year of this, the holy Jew reappeared, entered the mansion without knocking and walked into Avraham's study. Avraham looked up at the intruder and when he realized whom it was, he stood up, forced a huge smile and opened his arms in feigned joy. "Ahh Rabbi! What a pleasure to see you! What a wonderful surprise! How happy I am!!!" (Avraham, now a businessman, learned to think quickly in all situations.)

"Come let me show you around my house. It's really all yours, ha ha! Don't think I've forgotten. I've been very busy though, and you know..." The Rabbi was walking through the rooms examining everything and Avraham was trying to keep up with him, "I'm not used to all this money yet, ha ha! But as soon as things get settled down I'm... Uh, excuse me Rabbi but what are you doing to that mirror? It's a real beauty isn't it! I had it sent specially from France. Why are you scraping off the silver on the back?!"

The Rabbi paid no attention, he had a little pocketknife and he was scraping at the back of the huge mirror that blocked Avraham's front window. When he had scraped off

a good sized patch he looked at Avraham pointed to the good part of the mirror and said,

"Look here Avraham. What do you see?"

Avraham looked and answered, "Why I see myself Rabbi".

"And what do you see over here where I scraped off?" The Rabbi asked.

"Well Rabbi, I mean... I used to see my reflection but well now ehh...well...you scraped off that coating on the back...well...heh heh."

"Please Avraham" the Rabbi interrupted, "I asked you to tell me what you DO see."

Avraham cleared his throat and looked again at the scratched mirror, "All right...Through the mirror I see the front window... well... I actually see through the front window, the street."

"And who do you see in the street? Tell me everything you see."

"Well I see Zalman the water carrier and Sara the widow with a few of her children, and Shlomo the beggar and some of the boys from the yeshiva, they don't look so good either."

The Rebbe put his hand over the mirror, to show that the lesson was over, and waited for Avraham to look him in the eyes.

"You see Avraham... Because of a little covering of silver ... all you see is yourself."

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)

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 8 - 9 June	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	4:50	5:51
Adelaide	4:53	5:52
Brisbane	4:42	5:38
Darwin	6:10	7:02
Gold Coast	4:40	5:36
Perth	5:01	5:59
Sydney	4:35	5:34
Canberra	4:40	5:39
Launceston	4:30	5:34
Auckland	4:53	5:53
Wellington	4:42	5:45
Hobart	4:25	5:30
Byron Bay	4:38	5:34

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS SHLACH • 25 SIVAN • 8 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	4.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	5.25 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.52 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MOLD WILL BE	WEDNESDAY 6.05 (7 chalakim) PM
	FARBRENGEN AFTER DAVENING	
	MINCHA	4.45 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	4.55 PM
	MAARIV	5.40 PM