

Lamplighter

15 Sivan
Shlach
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Shlach, contains the account of the twelve spies sent to scout out the land of Israel. Upon their return they announced, "We will not be able to go against the people, for they are stronger than we - *Mimenu*."

Our Sages explain that the Hebrew word "*Mimenu*" may also be interpreted "than him" - than Him! The spies insisted that the Canaanites were even more powerful than G-d, who had promised the land to the Jews.

How could they have made such a statement? The 12 spies were men of distinction and piety. Furthermore, the entire Jewish people had just witnessed the greatest open miracles - the exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Red Sea and the manna from the sky. Why wasn't the spies' report simply discounted, instead of being given such credence?

When the spies insisted that the Land was too well fortified to be conquered, Calev stood up and calmed the people. "Don't worry," he insisted. "The same G-d who performed all these miracles for us will continue to guard His people. Let us go up at once, without fear!"

"But," countered the spies, "there we saw the Nefilim, the sons of Anak!" Who were these Nefilim, that their mention threw fear into the hearts of the Jews? The great commentator, Rashi, explains that the Nefilim were people of gigantic stature, descendants of two angels who had descended to earth many years before during the generation of Enosh. Their very name - "Nefilim" - attests to their descent, from the root word meaning "to fall."

Yes, conceded the spies, G-d is certainly more powerful than mere mortals. But can G-d prevail against the Nefilim and their higher level of spirituality? The Nefilim had even survived the great flood which destroyed the rest of the world. These two angels, who came down into the world with the best and holiest of intentions, were unable to withstand the lure of the material world. They and their descendants ended up degraded and debased. If angels, the spies contended, have failed, how much more so will we if we even attempt to conquer the Land. Let us simply reject the material world and remain in the wilderness!

To this, two of the spies, Joshua and Calev, replied, "No, this is not G-d's plan. G-d wants us to live in the physical world, performing physical mitzvot (commandments). 'Do not fear...for G-d is with us'." Angels may not be equipped to deal with this world, but we are even higher than the angels, for we possess a G-dly soul in a corporeal body. We have the power to fuse the physical with the spiritual, by performing concrete mitzvot which bring holiness into the world and make it a dwelling place for G-d. Thus, we can withstand any negative force, not only emerging triumphant, but transforming those very forces into instruments of good.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Toddling

By Yanki Tauber

Do you remember your first steps?

At first, father or mother would hold your hands in theirs and walk you across the room. Then, one day, he or she squatted before you, still holding your hands. Suddenly, he took a half-step back, let go, and you were on your shaky own.

You rushed to your parent. Perhaps you made it to her arms. Perhaps you fell flat on your face. In either case, you never really left her embrace, because all along her arms encircled you but inches from your body, prepared to let you fall, but also prepared to break or slow your fall if it were truly necessary.

But you probably did not notice those encircling arms. How could you notice them, when every muscle in your tiny body and every cell in your puerile brain were concentrated on the effort of putting one little foot before the other and reaching your father?

Who has not experienced this harrowing, helpless feeling in the course of his life? Who has not felt abandoned by G-d, aimlessly adrift in a hostile world? But G-d, said Chassidic master Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, is only acting as a benevolent parent teaching his child to walk. We never leave His embrace, though, at times, we do not notice His encircling arms. Indeed, how could we, consumed as we are by the daunting task of placing one toddling human foot before the other in the goal of reaching Him—on our own.

Imagine Moses' shock when G-d said to him: "I'm not telling you what to do. Do as your own understanding tells you."

G-d had already spoken many, many times to Moses, but always it was to tell him what to do. Go to Pharaoh, Moses. Tell him this and threaten him with that. Bring on the plagues, split the sea, gather the manna each morning—but remember, double portion on Fridays, none on Shabbat. I Am the L-rd you G-d. Thou shalt not have any other gods before Me. Honour thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not cook a kid in its mother milk. Journey there. Camp here.

And then, one day, the children of Israel had this idea. Let us send spies, they said to Moses, to tour the land of Canaan, which G-d has commanded us to conquer.

"G-d didn't say anything about sending spies," said Moses.

"But we think it's a good idea. Ask Him."

So Moses asks, and G-d says to him: "I'm not telling you what to do. Do as your own understanding tells you."

The people of Israel sent those spies in the end. Their mission was a fiasco. The Jews' entry into the Holy Land was delayed for forty years, and the entire course of Jewish history was altered.

The two year old nation was beginning to walk.



Beyond all boundaries

Rabbi Yaakov Biederman is a Chabad representative in Austria. Presently he is the director of a large Jewish educational complex that he miraculously built from nothing.

This is how it happened.

Shortly after the terrible nuclear catastrophe in Chernobyl in 1988 Rabbi Biederman received an urgent telephone call from New York.

One of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's secretaries, Rabbi Leibel Groner, was on the other end of the line with a desperate request. The meltdown of the atomic plant there produced more than one hundred times deadly radioactive fallout as the bomb in Hiroshima and everyone in the area, especially the children, were in grave danger. (Radioactivity is especially dangerous to growing children)

"Hello, Rabbi Biederman. This is Rabbi Groner. The Rebbe told me to call you and tell you that you must urgently do all you can to get as many Jewish children out of the Chernobyl area as possible and bring them to Israel. The Rebbe said that it is a matter of life and death and that every minute lives are being lost! Do all you can to save them!!"

Rabbi Biederman was stunned. Why did the Rebbe call him? How could he possibly save myriads of children? He was an ordinary 'Shaliach' (emissary) trying to spread as much Judaism as possible in the apathetic and often hostile

environment of Austria. But even more; unlike many of the other emissaries, he had absolutely no connection with either Russia or Israel!

What could he possibly do? He had no idea even where to start.

That evening, together with his wife, he had to attend an important wedding in Vienna. He was so disturbed by the telephone call that he was in no mood for weddings but he had to go.

A few hours later at the wedding he sat at his table lost in thought oblivious to the music and joyous chatter around him. "What is wrong, Rabbi, are you feeling all right?" the Jew sitting next to him asked. The fellow was a fairly wealthy businessman who had helped him with donations in the past.

Suddenly Rabbi Biederman got a crazy idea.

"Tell me Mr. R.. if I told you that there was a death-train headed for Auschwitz loaded with Jewish children and you could save them, what would you do?"

He looked at the Rabbi to see if he was serious and immediately answered "What would I do?! Why, I would give all I had to save them!! What's the question!!"

"Well," replied the Rabbi "That is exactly what is happening this very minute! And you can help!"

That very evening the businessman pledged one million dollars (!) to begin the rescue of the Chernobyl children.

That night Rabbi Biederman got on the phone to Israel and it wasn't long until he found someone willing to take the project; Rabbi Yosef Ahronov of the Chabad Youth Movement.

And to this day almost ten thousand children have been airlifted

to life and to safety in Israel.

But that is only the first half of the story.

To show appreciation for arranging such a large donation Rabbi Ahronov asked Rabbi Biederman with what can I repay you?

But Rabbi Biederman did not hesitate.

"I don't want money. I want a blessing from the Rebbe! That's right!" He continued to Rabbi Ahronov, "I want you to ask the Rebbe for a blessing for me for my Chabad House. That will be my payment. Tell the Rebbe that instead of money I want a blessing for miraculous success above all natural boundaries."

Rabbi Ahronov called the secretariat of the Rebbe, explained Rabbi Biederman's unusual request and hours later received an answer from the Rebbe with the blessing.

From that day on it seemed as though a new world opened up for Rabbi Biederman; as though all the restrictions had been lifted. He began a massive project; a Jewish college in Vienna. Jewish students were assimilating, there was no place they could get a Jewish environment no less Jewish education, and Rabbi Biederman decided he would save them.

Before the Rebbe's blessing it was impossible, unthinkable! But now it was different. As soon as he made the idea public, funds and support came from all sides. People he never dreamed would help, even some who had been hostile, suddenly came to his assistance.

And that is how Rabbi Biederman built a massive multi-million dollar Jewish University complex in the heart of Vienna.

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ISSUE 987

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the Era of the Redemption, Israel will be divided into 13 portions, a portion for each tribe including Levi. The tribe of Levi did not receive a portion in Israel, for the Levites were set aside to serve G-d and to instruct the Jewish people. This applies in the present era, when the material nature of the world prevents a person from being both totally dedicated to G-d and simultaneously involved in the world. In the Era of the Redemption, however, there will be no need for the Levites to set themselves aside from worldly involvement. Thus, they too will receive a portion of the Land. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shabbat Shelach, 5751-1991)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



The Business of Life

The following is a freely-translated excerpt from a letter by the Rebbe, dated Iyar 9, 5719 (May 17, 1959):

[This is] in response to your letter of the 3rd of Iyar, in which you relate the main points of what has transpired with you and your present situation, and conclude with the query: Why is it that when you desire to ascend in Torah and mitzvot, you encounter many difficulties, while at the same time one sees young men who elect to live a "free" life experience no difficulty, and require no toil or effort, to achieve their goal?

The answer to your question is to be found in your own letter. You describe how in order to realize your plans you need to study the profession for three to four years, and that in the interim you earn only 110 lirot per month, as an ordinary labourer. In other words, for work to be of greater value, it must be preceded by study and knowledge, in proportion to which the work is enhanced and more highly rewarded.

The reason for this is simple: the greater the achievement, the greater and broader the investment required; lesser achievements or activities which do not achieve anything require a lesser investment or no investment at all.

By the same token, a meaningless life requires no prior effort. Whatever satisfaction such a life holds is but momentary, so it should be no surprise that it requires no investment.

Anyone who gives thought to his future will readily devote several years of concentrated effort and investment, since by this means he will improve his life many times over in the near future, and in the decades to follow. As in the succinct and acute saying of our sages, "According to the pain is the gain." Indeed, the gain is many times the pain, toil and effort; that is to say, each increase of the "pain" yields an even higher rate of exchange in terms of reward and utility.

I hope that these few lines of mine will suffice so that, contemplating their content, you will reach the proper conclusion: that you must utilize these years and the youthful vigour they contain to make the proper investment for your entire future, one that would bring you happiness both materially and spiritually. There is but a single path that leads to this: the spiritual investment in the study of Torah, the Law of Life, and the fulfillment of its mitzvot ... in fulfillment of G-d's request, encouragement and command: "You shall choose life."

A WORD from the Director

This Shabbat we read the Torah portion of Shlach, in which we learn about the spies who Moses 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 Moses' discretion. We learn this from the words of the Torah portion, "Shlach Lecha - send for you," i.e., 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 fulfil 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 have 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

Blessings Miscellaneous

Thunder, Fragrances, Travellers & More

Besides the basic daily blessings – e.g., for eating or drinking, and those that are part of the prayers – there are a variety of other blessings recited on different occasions. This is characteristic of the Jewish habit to recognize G-d's hand in everything one experiences, and to humbly articulate this recognition.

The following are some of the more common blessings (all start with "Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe...").

After exiting the restroom and washing your hands, thank G-d for normal bodily function, for "forming man in wisdom..."

Before enjoying a delightful fragrance: ...*Who creates various kinds of spices.*

When donning a new valuable garment, or partaking of a seasonal fruit for the first time: ...*Who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.*

Upon seeing a shooting star, comet, earthquake, volcano, tornado, hurricane, lightning bolt (once per storm), ocean, or majestic mountain (for the first time in 30 days): ...*Who re-enacts the*

work of creation.

Upon hearing thunder (once per storm): ...*Whose power and might fill the world.*

Upon seeing a rainbow: ...*Who remembers the covenant [to Noah], and is faithful to His covenant, and keeps His promise.*

After surviving a life-threatening situation (e.g., a serious illness or auto accident), or a journey overseas, recite the *Hagomel* in the presence of ten men (if possible, after receiving an *aliyah*): ...*Who bestows kindness upon the culpable, for He has bestowed goodness to me. (The congregation responds: May He who has bestowed beneficence upon you always bestow every beneficence upon you.)*

When embarking upon a journey a distance of more than 72 minutes outside city limits, recite the Traveler's Prayer.

CUSTOMS CORNER

It Happened Once...



Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin was expected at the home of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi. But the visit gave rise to a dispute between the Rebbe's wife and their daughter, Freyda. For several years now, 'Freidkeh' had taken charge of all the cooking in the house; now, in honour of the distinguished guest, the Rebbetzin wanted to retake the kitchen. The Rebbetzin cited seniority and mistress of the house rights. Her daughter argued that since she always does all the cooking, it is hardly fair that the task be taken from her just when an honoured guest was due to arrive.

The case was referred for arbitration to Rabbi Shneur Zalman, who offered the following compromise: the Rebbetzin will prepare the food, but Freidkeh will add the salt. Since the food would be all but tasteless without her contribution, the privilege of feeding Rabbi Shlomo would be equally hers.

When the much-contested dish finally reached the table, Rabbi Shlomo Karliner found himself unable to continue past the first spoonful. The force of decades-long habit had caused the Rebbetzin to salt the food without even realizing it, and Freidkeh, of course, had not failed to perform her duty. The result was simply impossible to swallow.

But the sodium story of this hapless dish was far from over: a third dish of salt now joined its predecessors, this time cast by the hand of Rabbi Shneur Zalman himself. Upon noticing the neglected plate in front of his guest, the Rebbe figured that perhaps the food was not sufficiently salted to Rabbi Shlomo's taste.

Finally, Rabbi Shneur Zalman asked the Karliner why he wasn't eating. Rabbi Shlomo replied that the food was too salty to eat. Surprised, Rabbi Shneur Zalman took another spoonful from his own plate and swallowed thoughtfully. "You know," he said, "you're right."

"From the time that I journeyed to Mezritch to my Rebbe," Rabbi Shneur Zalman explained, "I have not sensed the taste of food."

A man who had been sent from Tsfat (Safed), in the Holy Land, to gather funds for his community visited the city of Rabbi Avraham Dov of Avritch and spoke wonders in praise of Israel. He described the air, the landscape, flowers and fruits. In language rich in expression, he pictures the holy places and gravesites of the *tzadikim*.

His enthusiasm knew no bounds, until he finally bubbled over and said, "Rebbe, what can I say? Why should I go on? Even the rocks of Israel are pearls and precious stones of all sorts!"

The Rebbe who had already previously pined to go up to the Holy Land could no longer find peace. In 1830 at age 65, he left his city and his flock of chassidim, went up to Israel, and settled in Tsfat.

Sometime afterwards the funds gatherer returned home from his travels. He came before the Rebbe and asked with interest, "Well, then, has the Rebbe found what he hoped to see?"

"The land is, indeed, very, very good," said the Rebbe. "The holy places, the graves of the *tzadikim*, the Western Wall, the tomb of Rachel, the air — the air of Israel grants wisdom — everything is exceptional. But when you said the rocks were pearls, that was an exaggeration."

The man reacted strongly and said, "Rebbe, whoever is worthy ... sees it!"

The Rebbe rose without a word, and closeted himself in his room. For an entire year he did not leave that room. For an entire year he secluded himself and devoted himself to his Maker, through study and prayer, cut off from the world. When the year drew to a close, he emerged and invited the residents of Tsfat to a feast of thanksgiving.

All sat, filled with curiosity, desirous to hear why the Rebbe had lived in enforced solitude and why he had called upon them to gather for this feast.

The Rebbe proclaimed, "Indeed, the statement is correct. The rocks *are* pearls; whoever is found worthy... sees it."

Those present did not understand him and so he told them about the collector of funds and what the man had said.

"In all my life," he said, "no one ever spoke to me with such force. I felt that Heaven had put the words on his lips in order to encourage me to reach such a state. I closed myself in my room; I sanctified and purified myself. And, indeed, my eyes were opened. I bear true witness before you. The rocks of Israel are precious stones and shine with the lustre of pearls."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

And you shall bring from the fruit of the earth. (*Num. 13:20*)

To understand personal growth, one must bring an example from the fruit of the earth. First one sows the seed; only after the seed decomposes, and its essence is nullified can it grow and produce. (*The Baal Shem Tov*)

And we were in our own eyes as grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes. (*Num. 13:2*)

This statement was in itself one of the sins that the spies committed. They should not have concerned themselves with how they appeared to others. It was not enough that they felt as if they were as small as grasshoppers, they felt obliged to add that the giants agreed with them. (*Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotsk*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS SHLACH • 16 SIVAN • 18 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:49 PM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:30 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:58 AM
	MINCHA:	4:45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:51 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	MAARIV:	5:45 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 17 JUNE 2011

Begins		Ends
4:49	MELBOURNE	5:51
4:53	ADELAIDE	5:52
4:43	BRISBANE	5:39
6:11	DARWIN	7:03
4:40	GOLD COAST	5:36
5:01	PERTH	5:59
4:35	SYDNEY	5:34
4:40	CANBERRA	5:39
4:30	LAUNCESTON	5:34
4:53	AUCKLAND	5:54
4:40	WELLINGTON	5:44



Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נבג"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.