

SHELACH

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Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת הרה"ח הרה"ח
הר"ר ישעי' זושא ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
גלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב
תנצב"ה

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרב משה יצחק
בן הרב חיים צבי הירש ע"ה
קאניקאוו
גלב"ע ביום י"ט סיון ה'תשד"מ
תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת
אבי מורי יוסף בן אברהם ע"ה
קיעוומאן
גלב"ע ביום כ"ג סיון ה'תשע"ט
תנצב"ה

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שלח Shelach

יג:ל | 13:30

וַיְהִי כִּלְבָּ אֶת הָעָם אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר עָלֵה
נַעֲלֶה וְנִרְשְׁנוּ אֹתָהּ כִּי יָכוֹל נוֹכַח לָהּ

*Calev silenced the people regarding Moshe, and he said,
“We shall surely go up and take possession of it, for we
can indeed overcome it.”*

Telling Priorities

Moshe sent spies to the Land of Israel. Upon their return, they reported: “We came to the land to which you sent us, and indeed it is flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. However, the people who inhabit the land are mighty, and the cities are extremely huge and fortified...”¹

At that point Calev interrupted them. He silenced the nation and assured them, “We shall surely go up and take possession of it [the Land], for we can indeed overcome it.”

Why did Calev interrupt the spies’ report? Up until that point, they had spoken only about the richness of the land

1. Bamidbar 13:27–28.

and the strength of its inhabitants—precisely what Moshe had asked them to investigate! What did Calev see in their words that already put him on the defensive?

What Calev noticed was that they did not report their findings in the same order as Moshe's directives to them. In this slight deviation Calev sensed a fundamental difference of priorities between the spies and Moshe.

Moshe said, "See the land, what is it: are the people who inhabit it strong or weak? Are they few or many? And what of the land they inhabit: is it good or bad?"² The first thing he asked about was the strength of the land's inhabitants, because his primary concern was how to go about fulfilling G-d's instruction to conquer the land. The quality of the land was only of secondary significance to him.

The spies, however, spoke first about the benefits of the Land—"it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit"—and only afterward about the challenging task of conquering it that lay before them.

Calev realized immediately that they were making a dreadful mistake. When a person is doing G-d's will, but is primarily focused on the reward he will receive, his dedication to the task is determined by the benefit it will yield: does the reward justify going to great lengths to fulfill this particular mitzvah or not? And when mitzvos become defined by the degree of difficulty they entail, it isn't long before a person wrongly concludes that some of G-d's commands are simply impossible.

As such, even before the spies finished sharing the conclusions they had garnered from their visit, Calev knew he had to protest.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, pp. 1313–1314

2. Bamidbar 13:18–19.

 יג:לא | 13:31

לֹא נוֹכַח לָעֲלֹת אֶל הָעָם כִּי חָזָק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ

*“We are unable to go up against the people,
for they are stronger than we are.”*

Manufacturer’s Instructions

Moshe sent spies to the Land of Israel, instructing them, “See the land, what is it: are the people who inhabit it strong or weak? Are they few or many? And what of the land they inhabit: is it good or bad? And what of the cities in which they reside: are they in camps or in fortresses?”³

When the spies returned, they reported, “The people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very great.”⁴ Thus, concluded the spies, “We are unable to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.”⁵ Their report caused the people to weep, insisting that they would rather return to Egypt than enter the land. As a result, G-d delayed Bnei Yisrael’s entry into Israel for an additional thirty-nine years, and the ten spies were punished and died from a plague.

But what was the spies’ actual crime? Had Moshe not instructed them to investigate those exact details?

The spies’ offense was not in their report, per se, but in the mistaken conclusions they drew based on their findings. Seeing the natural challenges that they would face, the spies

3. Bamidbar 13:18–19.

4. Bamidbar 13:28.

5. Bamidbar 13:31.

concluded that fulfilling G-d's command was simply beyond Bnei Yisrael's abilities.

Moshe, on the other hand, asked about the land and its inhabitants, but only for tactical purposes—in order to chart the most feasible route for a natural victory. If it would ultimately require miracles, Moshe trusted that G-d would intervene. He was certain that G-d's instruction to conquer the land would be realized; it was only a question of the best way to make it happen.

The story of the spies and their tragic mistake underscores the importance of taking Moshe's approach when we encounter any mitzvah that seems too difficult, or even impossible, for us to fulfill. The logic is simple: If even a human being would not instruct someone to perform a task that he knew the other person was incapable of performing, certainly the Creator, who knows the precise abilities with which He created each of us, and before whom there are no miscalculations, gives only commands that are unquestionably within our reach.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 13, pp. 39–40

 יג:לג | 13:33

וַשֵּׁם רָאִינוּ אֶת הַנְּפִילִים בְּנֵי עֲנָק מִן הַנְּפִילִים

*There we saw the Nephilim, sons of the giant,
who descended from the Nephilim.*

Where the Angels Failed

The Midrash⁶ relates that when the early humans took to worshipping idols, two angels, Shamchazai and Azael, suggested before G-d that they could replace humankind in fulfilling the world's purpose. G-d replied, "It is known and revealed to Me that if you dwelled upon the earth, the evil inclination would dominate you; in fact, you would be even worse than the sons of man." But they insisted, so G-d allowed them to descend to earth. Sure enough, they immediately became corrupted.

Years later, when Moshe sent spies to the Land of Israel, the spies returned and reported that in addition to the "natural" giants that they saw in the Land,⁷ they also encountered giant Nephilim. These Nephilim were the descendants of the corrupted angels. As Rashi⁸ explains, the word Nephilim shares a common root with the Hebrew word *nafal*, fallen, for the Nephilim descended from Shamchazai and Azael, who "fell" from heaven.

With their report about the Nephilim, the spies intended not only to frighten Bnei Yisrael with regard to the brute strength of the Land's inhabitants, but also to terrify them about the spiritual risks that entering the Land entailed. As

6. Yalkut Shimoni, Bereishis 44.

7. See Bamidbar 13:28.

8. Bamidbar 13:33.

explained in Likkutei Torah,⁹ the spies wanted to remain in the desert, where all their physical needs were automatically (miraculously) provided. They feared that the burden of material concerns awaiting them in the Land would preclude them from enjoying the spiritual life they had become accustomed to in the desert. The spies' mention of the Nephilim, whose interaction with the material world led to their corruption, was meant to validate their claim.

But the spies were mistaken. As Yehoshua and Calev insisted, "If G-d desires us, He will bring us to this land."¹⁰ Where angels failed, a Jew can succeed. For "G-d desires us": His greatest source of delight is the Jew who serves Him from within the physical constraints of this world. Therefore, a Jew's ability to be spiritually sensitive even while engaging with the material world is incomparably greater than that of an angel. Moreover, a Jew can ultimately transform the material world, and make it a place of holiness.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 28, pp. 91-92

9. Shelach 37a.

10. Bamidbar 14:8.

 טו:כ-כא | 15:20-21

רֵאשִׁית עֲרֹסֹתְכֶם חֲלָה
תְּרִימוֹ תְּרוּמָה... תִּתְּנוּ לַה' תְּרוּמָה

*The beginning of your dough you shall
separate as challah... a gift to G-d.*

The Theory of Dough

The mitzvah of *challah* obligates us to separate a portion of every (large) batch of dough that we bake, and give it as a gift to the Kohen. The Midrash notes that immediately following this commandment comes a portion in the Torah regarding someone who worshipped idols. “This teaches us,” says the Midrash, “that one who fulfills the mitzvah of *challah* is as though he has abolished idolatry; while one who does not fulfill the mitzvah of *challah* is as though he maintained idolatry.”¹¹

How is the simple act of separating a piece of dough associated with the cardinal sin of idolatry?

At its core, idolatry is not just the worship of a deity other than the one true G-d, but also the mistaken belief that any power, such as nature, functions independently of Him. Moreover, even the belief that any entity exists independently of G-d runs contrary to our belief that “there is nothing beside Him.”¹²

The Midrash therefore compares the observance of *challah* to the abolition of idolatry, and the failure to separate *challah* to maintaining idolatry.

11. Vayikra Rabbah 15:6.

12. Devarim 4:35.

From planting the grain to baking the dough, the making of bread involves a great degree of human involvement and skill. So, on a broader scale, dough represents our effort to provide for our needs through what seems to be a natural process, in which our returns seem directly influenced and controlled by our toil. However, when the first thing we do with our dough is to separate a portion of it as a gift to G-d, we are acknowledging that all of our human efforts don't even begin to generate our income. Rather, it is G-d's blessing that ensures our sustenance and success.

Moreover, the separation of *challah* as a gift to G-d acknowledges that since G-d brings the entire world into existence anew at every moment, all of existence truly belongs to Him. We are therefore giving Him the dough that is truly His own.

Thus, by separating *challah* we abolish the mistaken theory of idolatry, by declaring to the world that neither the powers of nature nor the efforts of man exist apart from G-d.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, pp. 183–185

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הנערה חנה דינה תחי'
בת הרה"ת חיים וזוגתו מרת ביילא שיחיו
גרייזמאן

לרגל הגיעה לגיל שתים עשרה שנה היא עונת בת מצוה בשעטו"מ
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ותצליח בקיום המצוות מתוך יראת שמים טהורה
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע

לעילוי נשמת
מרת איטא פייגא
בת ר' אברהם ע"ה
ספיטעצקי

נלב"ע ביום כ"ה סיון ה'תשס"ב

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו

ולעילוי נשמת
 הרה"ת שלום דובער ב"ר משה ע"ה וישצקי
 נלב"ע ביום השבת ל' סיון א' דר"ח תמוז ה'תשס"ז
 ולעילוי נשמת
 התמים יוסף יצחק ב"ר שלום דובער ע"ה וישצקי
 נלב"ע ח' סיון ה'תשפ"א
 ולעילוי נשמת
 מרת רבקה בת ר' ישראל אבא ע"ה פליסקין
 נלב"ע י"ז תמוז ה'תשפ"ב
 ולעילוי נשמת
 הרה"ת שאול ב"ר שלום דובער וישצקי
 נלב"ע ביום השוב"ק ל' סיון א' דר"ח תמוז ה'תשפ"ד
 ולעילוי נשמת
 הרה"ח ישראל אבא ב"ר שאול ע"ה פליסקין
 נלב"ע ביום כ"ז סיון ה'תשנ"ו
 ולעילוי נשמת
 מרת פעשא בת ר' ראובן ע"ה פליסקין
 נלב"ע כ"ג אייר ה'תשמ"ב
 ולעילוי נשמת
 הרה"ת משה ב"ר יצחק פנחס ע"ה וישצקי
 נלב"ע י"ג טבת ה'תשמ"ו
 ולעילוי נשמת
 מרת שימא חשא בת ר' שלמה ע"ה וישצקי
 נלב"ע ט"ו סיון ה'תשמ"ה
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