

Parashas Shelach

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כ"ן סיון תשפ"ה
5785

י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הר"צ
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רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

צריך למשמש באמונתו כל שעה

טיב המערכות

ארץ אוכלת יושביה?

A land that devours its inhabitants?

The Midrash tells (Bereishis Rabbah Vayeira) that when Avraham Avinu was on the way to *Akeidas Yitzchak*, the Satan tried to interfere. What did he do? He disguised himself as an old man and said to Avraham, "What is this thing that you are doing? How can you go to slaughter your only son? Surely this is not the will of the Creator?" And when Avraham did not listen to him, he disguised himself as a young man and spoke to Yitzchak with words such as these: "Why are you going along with your father? Is he not going to slaughter you?" But Yitzchak also did not want to listen to him. On the third attempt, he transformed himself into a river and blocked their path, but they continued on their way and entered the water until it reached their necks. Then Avraham shouted at the Satan, "May Hashem rebuke you, Satan!" and the Satan was frightened by Avraham's voice and left. So, what does all of this have to do with our parashah?

The spies returned from scouting out the land and brought back a negative report, saying 13:32), 'ארץ אוכלת יושביה היא' - "It is a land that consumes its inhabitants." Rashi explains: "In every place we passed, we found them burying their dead. And HaKadosh Baruch Hu did this for good, to preoccupy them with their mourning so they would not pay attention to these [spies]." The spies saw correctly—in every place they passed, they saw funerals. What is this? What kind of land is this, where people are constantly dying?

If so, we ask: where did they go wrong? What was the problem with them? According to the words of Rashi, we understand: they lacked the faith that everything HaKadosh Baruch Hu does is for our good. "HaKadosh Baruch Hu did this for good, to preoccupy them with their mourning." Or in other words: they should have trusted in Hashem—and that they did not do.

When we learn and tell our children about the spies, we are sure that we are better than them, that we would not have behaved that way. But the truth is that every one of us faces such tests daily. The holy Rebbe of Berditchev, may his merit shield us, once said: "If I were in the place of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, I would run the world exactly as He does." Meaning: I trust Hashem that He does everything in the best and most correct way.

And just as we are required to nullify our own will before Hashem, so must we nullify our will before our parents and our teachers—just like our forefathers Avraham and Yitzchak—even to the point of entering deep waters, against logic and reason, in order to fulfill the will of our Creator.

- Tiv HaTorah - Shelach

One must examine his faith at every moment

שְׁלַח לְךָ אֲנָשִׁים וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אֶחָד אִישׁ אֶחָד (יג, ב) (לְמַשָּׁה אֲבֹתָיו תִּשְׁלְחוּ כָל נָשִׂיא בָהֶם: (יג, ב)

Send for yourself men and let them spy out the Land of Canaan that I give to the Children of Israel, one man each from his fathers' tribe you shall send, every one a leader among them. (13:2)

Rashi explains: Send for yourself men – by your discretion. I do not command you to do so, if you wish, send. Since Israel came and said (Devorim 1:22), 'נשלחה אנשים לפנינו' – 'Let us send men ahead of us' as it says 'ותקרבון אלי כלכם' – 'All of you approached me', and Moshe consulted the Shechina, and G-d said, "I told them that the Land is good, as it says (Shemos 3:17), 'אעלה אתכם מעני מצרים' – 'I shall bring you up from the affliction of Egypt...'. I swear by their lives that I give them room to err through the words of the spies so that they will not take possession of it.'

Behold, from the words of Rashi we see that the very fact that the Israel said, "Let us send men ahead of us," already proved that they were lacking in faith. However, they had not yet reached the point of actual heresy, and it was still possible to warn them that in sending the spies, they were placing themselves in danger of falling into heresy.

This means that at that time, before the spies were actually sent, even though there was already some deficiency in their faith, they were still not deserving of stumbling and being drawn after the spies' words. And if, at that point, distant rumors had reached them about the strength of the seven nations, they would not have been deterred at all, because they still trusted and relied on the salvation of Hashem. As is indeed seen, even initially when they wanted to send spies, they did not seek to know the strength of the nations, but only how it would be easiest to conquer the land. As the Torah itself testifies (Devarim 1:22), their request was: 'נשלחה אנשים לפנינו וגו' וישיבו אותנו דבר את הדרך אשר נעלה' – "Let us send men before us... and they will return a report to us about the path by which we shall ascend and the cities to which we shall come." From here you learn that they did not seek to know the might of the nations at all, because they were confident in Hashem that He would deliver them into their hands even if they were mighty in strength. They only thought that they had to prepare and know in advance what was expected of them.

However, the higher will was not pleased even with this, for HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted them to place their trust in Him for that as well—that He would guide them and cause their conquest to succeed without any preparation at all. So that they would have no claim to say, "My strength and the might of my hand has made me this victory." And although, generally speaking, a person is obligated to make natural efforts for any matter he

needs, in this case they were not in need of that, for HaKadosh Baruch Hu had explicitly promised them (Shemos 3:17), "I shall bring you up from the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite." Therefore, they had only to trust in His word.

And about this Hashem said to Moshe: since in practice their trust in Him is not complete, they are endangering themselves through their actions, for they are liable to completely lose their hope in Him. And as indeed happened in the end—their faith weakened entirely and they were drawn after the words of the spies, who dared to say in front of the entire nation, *כִּי חָזַק הוּא מִמּוֹנוֹ* - "For it is stronger than He" (below, 13:31). See there in Rashi, who explains that they were referring to Hashem Yisbarach, *Rachmana litzlan*. And in the Gemara (Sotah 35a), it says that they said, "Even the Master of the house cannot remove His vessels from there."

Behold, it is fitting for us to reflect on the matter: why indeed did their faith weaken? For according to what we have said, they were initially people of faith, and they relied solely upon the strength of their Creator.

And were it not for the insight HaKadosh Baruch Hu, we could have said that their error was only one of "perspective"—that they believed that even though the Creator Baruch Hu had promised them victory, He did not intend for them to proceed like a blind person groping in the dark. Therefore, they thought they must prepare in advance to know the way they were to go. And it is true that once HaKadosh Baruch Hu revealed that these matters stemmed from a "flaw in faith," we no longer have a claim to interpret it merely as an "error." Nevertheless, we must still understand how they deteriorated so far—after all, it is possible to say that the *yetzer* had an opening to entice them and cloak their weakness as a matter of "perspective," as we explained. But why should this be an opening to change their mind and entirely nullify their faith?

However, a great principle in the *avodah* of *emunah* has been taught to us here:

emunah [faith] in all matters is hidden from the eye. Therefore, even after a person merits clear faith, he is obligated to examine it and review it constantly. And if he turns his attention away from his faith, necessarily it will weaken from him. The longer he remains distracted, the more its impression fades. As explained by the holy Rebbe Moshe of Kovrin on the *posuk* (Tehillim 116:10), *הָאֱמֻנָה כִּי* - "I believed, for I shall speak," that the *posuk* means that the merit of "I believed" comes through the fact that I frequently express and review statements of faith.

In light of this, the claim of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is well understood: for once it was revealed before Him Yisbarach, that their request to send spies stemmed from a weakening of faith, He also knew that the weakness was a result of "distraction of the mind." Because of that, the clear impression they had merited at the revelation at Mount Sinai had already weakened in them. Although faith was still engraved within them, some weakening was already discernible. As a result, the *yetzer* already had the ability to "twist" the will of Yisbarach and present His words to them in a distorted way, not in their true intent. Therefore, He said to Moshe: by their lives, I shall give them room to err—for if they continue in their distraction, the impression will weaken more and more, and later they may be drawn even after the counsel of the spies, which was overt heresy in its plain sense.

For this reason, the tribe of Levi was not pleased with the sending of the spies (see Rashi, Devarim 1:23), for the tribe of Levi always examined their faith well. As is seen also in the sin of the Golden Calf, they were not deterred at all by the terrible concealment that prevailed at that time. As the Torah testifies (Shemos 32:26), that after the incident of the Calf, Moshe stood at the gate of the camp and proclaimed: *וַיֹּאסְפוּ אֵלָיו כָּל בְּנֵי לֵוִי* - "Whoever is for Hashem, come to me!" - "And all the sons of Levi gathered unto him"—the entire tribe came and declared that they had no part in that sin. This means that they guarded their faith like the apple of their eye, and therefore its impression was not weakened. And even now, in the matter of sending the spies, their faith remained strong, and they initially refused to send them. Therefore, they also recoiled from the words of the spies and were not drawn after them (see Rashi later on, Bamidbar 14:29, from which it appears that they were not punished for this, and thus it is necessary to say that they were not drawn after the spies).

This is the essential point that must be derived from these words of Rashi. Rashi, through his words, reveals to us a person's obligation to examine his faith daily, and even hourly. For only through this will his faith remain strong. And the practical advice for this is that one should constantly involve himself in holy *seforim* that strengthen pure faith.

טִיב הָאֱמוּנָה

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‘תקפיד לא להפקיד’

‘Be careful not to hold a grudge’

“You really did a number on me!!! The main thing is that you made your profit on the sale of the property, and you left me stuck with an apartment that has been impossible to rent to anyone for over five months!!!”

As you have probably understood, I am a real estate agent, and I have a fundamental rule that guides me in business: “What I would not want for myself, I do not offer to someone else.” I felt utterly humiliated to hear such complaints about a dream apartment with a sea view that I had brokered for him, and I tried to think—what is the problem with the apartment?!

I remembered that in that same building, I had sold another apartment that was identical to this one, and the buyer was happy because the apartment was snapped up immediately and was rented at a good price.

I am a national-level broker, so I called a friend who mainly works as a broker in that specific area and asked for his opinion on why the apartment was not being rented. I began giving him the details of the apartment, and he completed the sentence for me and described the apartment exactly. Then, silence on the other end of the line. I asked what was happening, and after a tense silence, he said: “That apartment has no blessing in it, and that is why it is not being rented—and apparently, it never will be!!!”

I was startled and asked, “What caused the apartment to be cursed?” And he answered: “I was the one who brought that apartment to the market, and the company you worked for back then went behind my back and brokered the deal improperly. I told your employer at the time that this apartment would have no blessing in it, and now you see that deals done dishonestly never show any sign of blessing—ever!!!”

I explained to him that I am now independent, and what sin has the buyer committed, who did not know and still does not know that there had been fraud in his purchase?

Are the buyer or I to be blamed for the theft of the deal?

“The truth is, neither you nor the buyer should suffer because of my grievance. You really are not part of it. If that is the case, then I forgive! Forgiven!!! Forgiven!!! Forgiven are you!!! May my grievance not cause any harm to him or to you, Heaven forbid!!!”

He took it upon himself to find a tenant and said with confidence that within two weeks there would be a satisfied tenant living in the apartment!!!

At that point, it was already clear to me that if we had identified the source of the trouble, then the salvation would surely come...

In reality, within a week, a contract was signed with a tenant who was thrilled to have found such an apartment available for rent!!!

א.מ.

You Shall Set Aside Challah for Hashem

“ראשית עֲרֹסְתֵכֶם חֲלֶה תָּרִימוּ תְּרוּמָה וגו', מִרְאשִׁית עֲרֹסְתֵיכֶם תִּתְּנוּ לָהּ תְּרוּמָה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם» (טו, כ-כא).

The first portion of your dough you shall set aside as a gift... From the first of your dough, you shall give a gift (תְּרוּמָה) to Hashem, for all your generations (15:20–21).

The holy Be'er Mayim Chaim writes:

“From the first of your dough. It would seem it should have stated simply, *The first of your dough you shall give*, as it did earlier.”

“But the pasuk conveys that from the first of your dough, by setting aside only that challah, you give to Hashem. The entire dough is dedicated to Hashem. Through this act, you invite the light of the King of Life to rest upon the entire dough, thereby nullifying the hold of evil and materiality over it. It becomes part of the dominion of the Holy One, and His sovereignty is revealed across the land, as the earth and its fullness belong to Hashem.”

“This is a gift (תְּרוּמָה) for your generations, signifying an everlasting elevation (התרוממות). How immense is the reward of the one who performs this mitzvah, bringing the land and all upon it closer to Hashem. Such a person brings harmony to the heavenly and earthly realms, uniting them and establishing Hashem’s sovereignty in the lower world. The reward for this is infinite, for it brings great delight and satisfaction to the Creator, adorning the *Shechinah* with new ornaments.

“This individual is elevated and exalted to the highest levels, akin to a royal servant who dedicates his life to reuniting the king’s son from afar with his father. Such a person becomes greatly beloved and valued by the king, achieving tremendous closeness and importance. In addition to the blessings of Hashem bestowed upon such a person—countless blessings, salvations, and abundance for all the worlds—these blessings flow to the root of their soul, granting them sustenance for both body and soul. Surely, this is truly a gift (תְּרוּמָה) for your generations. For all time, when people understand that the earth belongs to Hashem and strive to return what is His through their proper intentions, even in mundane matters, this becomes an immense elevation for them.”

These holy words illuminate the deeper essence of the mitzvah of separating Challah—to sanctify and elevate the entire dough and to transform all aspects of our eating into acts dedicated to Heaven. It becomes an act that refines both body and soul, bringing delight to the Creator, blessed be His Name. Amen.

Rav Asher Freund, zt”l, founder and head of Yad Ezra institutions in the Holy Land, was renowned for his unwavering and pure faith. He instilled in his *talmidim* the principles of trust in Divine Providence and steadfast belief in Hashem’s guidance.

Every *Shabbos Mevarchim* (the Shabbos preceding *Rosh Chodesh*), Rav Asher traveled with his *talmidim* to Meron to spend Shabbos near the resting place of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai zt”l.

On one such journey, the vehicle transporting sixty challos needed for Shabbos failed to arrive. By the time the news reached the organizers in Meron, it was close to the onset of Shabbos, and no challos could be obtained.

With heavy hearts, the organizers informed Rav Asher of the dire situation. The holy rav, as was his way, remained entirely calm. With his characteristic smile, he said serenely: “Go, please, and search among the homes here in Meron. With Hashem’s help, you will find what you need!”

At that time, the village of Meron did not have many houses. The *gabba'im* went from house to house searching for extra challos, but found nothing.

When they reached the outskirts of the village, they noticed an old building that served as a *beis ulpana* (school). The building was empty, but they found the manager, who assumed they were looking for a particular student. He quickly sent them away, explaining that it was a “vacation Shabbos,” and all the students had gone home.

The *gabba'im* clarified that they were not looking for a student but had come to see if there were extra challos. Delighted, the manager said, “It’s very fortunate you came! The secretary forgot to cancel the challah order for this Shabbos despite the *talmidim* leaving. Today, the weekly delivery of challos arrived, and I have no use for them. I’d be happy to sell them to you!”

They counted the challos from the delivery and found precisely sixty—no more or less—exactly the amount needed.

When the *gabba'im* returned to Rav Asher and shared their astonishment at the wondrous *hashgachah pratis*, Rav Asher asked: “Did the manager simply rejoice at avoiding the loss of the challos, or did he also experience a trembling awe (*a treisel*) at the extraordinary *hashgachah* of Hashem, who lovingly and compassionately watches over His children?”

The holy Rav Leib Sarah's *zt"l*, was renowned in his generation as one of the great tzaddikim, towering like the sun in his righteousness. He was named after his righteous mother, Sarah, a widow who raised him with extraordinary self-sacrifice after his father passed away when he was still a child. Due to her immense devotion, he was known as "Reb Leib Sarah's."

Like many tzaddikim, Reb Leib was devoted to the mitzvah of *pidyon shvuyim* (redeeming captives), which was common in those days. Local landowners (*poritzim*), ruling over their estates with unchecked power, imprisoned Jewish tenants unable to pay their annual lease. The tyrants locked up entire families until the debts were paid.

The holy tzaddikim, deeply connected to the *Shechinah*, committed to raising the necessary funds from the Jewish community to redeem the captives. Beyond the liberation, the mitzvah was imbued with mystical intentions, representing an effort to "redeem the *Shechinah*," which, due to our sins, remains captive under the burden of exile. Through this earthly act of redemption, they sought to awaken heavenly mercy, raise the *Shechinah* from the dust, unite it with its Divine source, and adorn it with holy splendor.

During one of Rav Leib Sarah's journeys to collect funds for *pidyon shvuyim*, he arrived at an inn (*kretchma*) where a group of chassidim from the town of Mosh—*talmidim* of the holy Rav Mordechai of Lechovitch, *zt"l*—were staying on the way to their Rebbe.

After *Maariv*, the group sat for a meal at a large table, and Rav Leib joined them, sitting quietly on the side. This was when Rav Leib was still concealing his greatness, and the chassidim, unaware of his stature, assumed he was a simple pauper seeking charity.

Freshly baked bread, warm from the oven, was brought to the table in honor of the guests, and they savored its excellent quality. When the tray reached Rav Leib, he carefully selected a portion of bread, inspected it thoroughly, and, for reasons known only to him, set it aside, untouched, for the entire meal.

One of the chassidim, Rav Meir of Mosh, observed the mysterious elderly man's peculiar behavior with the bread and his refined conduct and mannerisms, and realized that he was far from ordinary. Despite his outward appearance, it was clear to Rav Meir that he was a great person concealing his true identity.

He approached the innkeeper and asked, "Who baked the bread served to the guests?" The woman replied that she had baked the bread from start to finish, ensuring that it was prepared with the utmost Kashrus.

"Was challah separated from this bread?" Rav Meir inquired further.

The woman paled and began trembling. She suddenly remembered that, due to the pressure of preparing the meal on time, she had forgotten to separate challah from the bread, *Rachmana litzlan!*

At that moment, Rav Meir understood that the mysterious elderly man must be one of the hidden tzaddikim, who, through holy insight, had sensed that challah had not been separated. (It is possible that by setting his portion aside, he wanted it to fulfill the mitzvah of separating challah for the bread the chassidim were eating.)

Seeing that the elderly man was clearly a great individual, Rav Meir wanted to receive a blessing from him. However, when he went to find him, the tzaddik was gone, having left with a group of impoverished travelers heading toward nearby towns.

Rav Meir, a wealthy and resourceful man, immediately hired a coachman with a strong horse and pursued the paupers to catch up to the hidden tzaddik and receive his blessing.

After a brief pursuit, he caught up with the group on a path leading to a nearby town, but Rav Leib was not among them. He questioned the travelers and they spoke of "Leibel" as a peculiar and eccentric man who always plunged into frozen rivers, breaking through snow to immerse himself in the icy waters.

"And where is he now?" Rav Meir asked.

They replied, "Deep in the forest; praying quietly to his Father in Heaven."

Rav Meir quickly made his way into the heart of the forest and soon heard a sweet and moving voice offering heartfelt prayers with great emotion and tears before the Ribbono Shel Olam. The voice was filled with fiery passion and devotion. Following the sound, he found Rav Leib Sarah's deeply immersed in prayer and supplication.

Rav Meir stood to the side, waiting patiently for a long time until the tzaddik finished. Then he approached and humbly requested a blessing.

The tzaddik responded, "At this moment, I am on a mission for the great mitzvah of *pidyon shvuyim*. I am urgently short of the necessary sum. If you will contribute the remainder for this mitzvah, I will give you abundant blessings."

Without hesitation, Rav Meir pulled out his bulging wallet, withdrew the full amount needed down to the last penny, and handed it over. Overjoyed, Rav Leib showered Rav Meir with abundant blessings before bidding him farewell with joy and gratitude.

Rav Meir continued his journey toward Lechovitch. However, since his fellow chassidim had proceeded directly to the Rebbe, Rav Meir now had to travel the dangerous road alone.

Unfamiliar with the paths, as he had never journeyed to the Rebbe on his own, Rav Meir soon found himself lost among the enormous trees of the dense forest. After wandering for some time, he noticed a faint light flickering in the distance.

As he approached, he discovered a small house deep within the forest. Knocking lightly on the door, he asked if he might stay the night.

The household members told him, "The master of the house is not here but is expected to return within the next few hours. If he agrees, you are welcome to stay for the night."

Hours passed, and in the middle of the night, a commotion arose as the master of the house arrived with a gang, laughing and carousing. It turned out to be a den of thieves. Upon seeing their "new guest," they pounced on him with terrible cruelty, tying him up tightly and binding him to the ground. The leader, the master of the house, told his men: "Now we are famished after today's hard labor. Let us first enjoy the meal waiting for us, and then we will deal with this 'big fish'—we'll behead him and divide his spoils!"

As they sat late into the night in their lair, devouring their meal with abandon, loud voices were suddenly heard. A large group of distinguished merchants entered the house, accompanied by stern-faced, armed policemen protecting them on their journey.

The moment the group spotted the bound figure of Rav Meir lying to the side, they understood they had stumbled upon the notorious gang of thieves who had terrorized the forest. The police acted swiftly, capturing the entire gang, binding them in chains, and loading them onto wagons to be transported to the central prison. They brought "purity" to the forest, delivering the surrounding towns from the fear and terror the bandits had sown.

The officers immediately released Rav Meir from his bonds. In the final moments, he had been saved from death and returned to life.

When Rav Meir asked the merchants why they were deep in the dense forest in the middle of the night, they admitted that it was also a mystery to them. They knew the route through the forest well and had never been lost. They regularly traveled the same path with police escorts to ensure their safety.

"But today," they said, "the horses suddenly veered into the forest and refused to return to the road. The horses galloped aimlessly until, all at once, they stopped in front of this house."

"Heaven was watching over you!" the merchants said to Rav Meir. "Because of you, this murderous gang has been captured, bringing relief to everyone in the region who lived in fear of them."

When Rav Meir arrived at the holy Rav Mordechai of Lechovitch, the Rebbe greeted him with great joy and warmth. Before Rav Meir could speak, the Rebbe said: "I am so happy to see you alive and well, whole in body and possessions! I knocked on every window in the heavenly realms to save you from the severe decree hovering over you, but I could not succeed. I prayed and pleaded for mercy all night, but my prayers were unanswered.

"Then, suddenly, a great light shone forth—it was the blessing of the holy Rav Leib Sarah's, combined with the *zechus* of your great *pidyon shvuyim*. That blessing and your kindness saved you, measure for measure, from your dire peril and sent the merchants and their guards to deliver you from death to a good life!"

This story teaches us the value of *emunas tzaddikim*—faith in the righteous—and the importance of connecting with them and following their ways. We are sustained in this world through the merit and blessings of tzaddikim. It also demonstrates the immense power of charity, which saved Rav Meir from his danger. As it is written (*Mishlei* 10:2) וְצַדִּיקָהּ תִּצִּיל מִמָּוֶת - *Charity saves from death*. And as it says in Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Zuta (*parashah* 1): "Great is charity, for it saves a person from the path of death. Great is charity, for it lengthens a person's days and years. Great is charity, for it brings a person to the life of the World to Come."