
THE WEISS EDITION

שלח

Shelach



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Light points

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

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

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ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

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נדפס ע"י חתנו ובתו הרה"ת מרדכי צבי

וזוגתו מרת עטיל שיחיו

קארענבליט

שלח *Shelach*

יג:לג | 13:33

וְשָׁם 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 Midrash¹ 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,² they also encountered giant

1. Yalkut Shimoni, Bereishis 44.

2. See Bamidbar 13:28.

Nephilim. These Nephilim were the descendants of the corrupted angels. As Rashi³ 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 explained in Likkutei Torah,⁴ 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.”⁵ 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

3. Bamidbar 13:33.

4. Shelach 37a.

5. Bamidbar 14:8.

 15:20-21 | ט:כ-כא

רֵאשִׁית עֲרֹסֹתְכֶם חֲלָה
 תָּרִימוּ תְרוּמָה... תִּתְּנוּ לָהּ תְרוּמָה

*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.”⁶

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.”⁷

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

6. Vayikra Rabbah 15:6.

7. 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*

 15:32 | טו:לב

וַיְהִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִדְבָּר וַיִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ מִקִּשְׁשׁ עֵצִים בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת

*When Bnei Yisrael were in the desert,
they found a man gathering wood on the Shabbos day.*

Intentions Alone Won't Do

The Torah tells of a man who gathered wood in violation of Shabbos, and whom G-d instructed be put to death. According to the Midrash,⁸ the wood-gatherer had noble motives. After the incident of the spies, it was decreed that the Jews of that generation would not enter the Land of Israel. As a result, some of the people erroneously believed that they were no longer obligated to keep the mitzvos. In order to demonstrate—through his liability—that the commandments were still in full effect, the wood-gatherer publicly violated Shabbos.

According to this explanation, the wood-gatherer did not truly desecrate Shabbos, for only deliberate and purposeful work constitutes *melachah*—labor that is biblically prohibited on Shabbos. Hence, Rabbi Shimon rules in the Mishnah⁹ that one is not liable for performing on Shabbos “labor that is not needed for itself.” An example would be if a person carried objects from his home to the public domain, but his objective was not the transfer to the public domain, but the removal of unwanted objects from his home. Similarly, the wood-gatherer’s objective was not the actual task he was performing (gathering wood), but the demonstration that the Shabbos laws were still in effect. Accordingly, he should not have been liable!

8. Cited in Tosafos, Bava Basra 119b.

9. Shabbos 93b, et al.

Nevertheless, G-d instructed that he be punished, because his motives did not have any discernible impact on the manner in which he did the prohibited labor, and therefore cannot be taken into halachic consideration.

The wood-gatherer's liability thus refuted the notion that mitzvos were not obligatory after the incident of the spies. As explained in *Likkutei Torah*,¹⁰ the spies wanted to remain in the desert, where Bnei Yisrael's chief occupation was the study of the Torah, instead of entering the Land of Israel, where their primary task would be actual observance of the mitzvos. Therefore, when G-d decreed that they would remain in the desert for forty years, the people reasoned that their generation was indeed not ready for a service of G-d that emphasized action. For them, a service of G-d involving the mind alone was sufficient.

The wood-gatherer demonstrated, however, that even in the laws of Shabbos, where thought plays such a significant role, intentions that have no bearing on one's actions are irrelevant. Likewise, even in the desert, a Jew's union with G-d is primarily achieved through practical observance of the mitzvos.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 28, pp. 94–97

10. Shelach 38b.

 15:39 | טו:לט

וְהָיָה לְכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם
אֵת כָּל מִצְוֹת ה' וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם

*It shall be a fringe for you, that you may look upon it
and remember all the commandments of G-d
and do them.*

Committed Clothing

Rashi explains how the *tzitzis*, ritual fringes, remind us of all the mitzvot. The numerical equivalents of the letters that spell the word *tzitzis*, צִיצִית, total 600. Add 8 for the number of threads on each corner and 5 for the number of knots tied on each fringe, and you have 613. Seeing the *tzitzis* thus reminds us of the 613 commandments.

Yet if the fringes alone remind us of the mitzvot, why does the fulfillment of this mitzvah require that the fringes be attached to a garment, a *tallis*? This requirement indicates that there is more to remembering the mitzvot than simply calling to mind the number 613.

Unlike the food we eat, which becomes absorbed into our flesh and blood, the clothing we wear envelops us but remains separate from our bodies. Clothing is therefore a metaphor for that which transcends understanding and cannot be absorbed by the human mind.

That is why the mitzvah can be fulfilled only when the *tzitzis* are strung on a garment. When the fringes extend from a garment, they symbolize that all 613 mitzvot stem from G-d's *will*, which utterly transcends human understanding, and likewise our commitment to their observance must tran-

scend reason. Without this recognition, symbolized by the *tallis*, the fringes alone do not represent the 613 mitzvos at all.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 2, pp. 324–325*

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' מאיר יהודא ישראל ע"ה

בהרה"ג הרה"ח הרב מרדכי ע"ה
נאמן בית חיינו ומשב"ק

הארליג

נפטר כ"ט סיון, ה'תשפ"ג
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

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ולזכות כל יוצאי חלציו שיחיו

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נדפס ע"י הרה"ת יוסף יצחק
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הארליג

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת יהודה צבי ב"ר משה יעקב ע"ה
פאגלמאן

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נלב"ע ביום א' בדר"ח תמוז ה'תשע"ג

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בניו

הרה"ת שמואל בנימין ומשפחתו שיחיו פאגלמאן
הרה"ת מרדכי ומשפחתו שיחיו פאגעלמאן



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