

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 216

**Shlach-Lesha** | The Mitzvah of Tzitzit and Its Power



# MESILOT

## *Pathways to the Soul*

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha  
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son  
**Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita**

פרשת שלח לך | אנגלית

# ...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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## Parshat Shlach Lecha

### Mr. Perfect

The esteemed scholar Rabbi Yochanan Dovid Solomon served in a variety of leadership roles over the course of his life, most of which involved the field of education.

Rabbi Yochanan Dovid was an exemplary educator, and thus, it was only natural that many of his students forged close bonds with him and poured out their hearts before him.

He heard many stories from his students throughout his lifetime, of all kinds and sorts, and he once related one such story regarding one of his students:<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Cohen returned home from work on Friday to be greeted by his wife with the "news" that there would be no cake for Shabbat.

"I prepared a cake and placed it in the oven," she explained, "but then there was a power outage, and the cake batter collapsed, and even once the electricity came back and the oven heated up again, what came out more resembled a hot mess than a cake."

Mr. Cohen's face displayed his frustration, "we won't have time to bake another cake before Shabbat," he said in dismay.

Then he roused himself and went on the offense: "But why didn't you bake the cake last night in the first place?"

His wife began to apologize: "I didn't think of that, I assumed that..."

Mr. Cohen cut her off and snapped at her: "Baking the Shabbat cake is your

responsibility; you have to make sure there's a cake and anticipate any possibility."

Justifying oneself in front of Mr. Cohen was an impossible task. He was thoroughly set in his ways — years of experience had honed his method.

In his view, any mishap must have an assigned culprit; for him, it was a matter of principle. The guilty party only needed to be found, and doing so was Mr. Cohen's specialty.

He only needed a couple of seconds, and he'd already level a finger of blame at the accused, along with a detailed indictment. Interestingly enough, however, never once did he find himself to be at fault for any mishap; it was always someone else.

One of his daughters once recounted to him a conversation she had with her teacher but was suddenly interrupted by her father: "Tell me, why did you have to say that to your teacher? Who asked you to say that? Why is your mouth constantly open, letting everything spill out?"

By dissecting and analyzing his daughter's slip of the tongue, Mr. Cohen made it quite clear that she committed a terrible offense with potentially disastrous consequences. He then elaborated, with utter confidence, on every dire outcome that might ensue.

Naturally, the people closest to him — his own family — were the first ones to be placed in the defendant's dock.

Living with him was no easy feat. He didn't just saddle the culprit with blame for the mishap itself but also heaped upon them a sense of guilt and an uneasy conscience: "Because of you, such-and-such is going to happen. If you had done it differently, this wouldn't have happened. Because of you, we will all suffer."

Mr. Cohen naturally expected that if the culprit had any conscience at all, they would lie awake all night tormented by it and spend at least a week going around downcast.

When Mr. Cohen sent his son to the store to buy groceries, he

never told him how much to buy. If the son asked, “How many should I get?” The answer was always the same: “Buy enough so that there’s plenty.”

Notice the cleverness: no matter how much the son purchased, if it ever turned out not to be enough, Mr. Cohen already had his ready-made scapegoat to haul before the pillory.

When assigning a task to a son or daughter, he never used terms of time, quantity, or number. He only stated the ideal outcome, and that alone was what he held them to.

Mr. Cohen himself could never be trapped by the protest: “Dad, you told me to bring only three bottles, so if all our cousins suddenly show up, it’s not my fault we ran out of drinks.”

Such a scenario could never arise, for he always explicitly said, “Buy enough so that it’ll be sufficient.” A far as he was concerned, he was covered; he was never found at fault.

The words “I made a mistake” or “I was wrong” did not exist in

his vocabulary. His conscience was always pristine. From his spotless pedestal, he would continually level accusations — sometimes at one person, sometimes at another.

Whenever a problem was raised, his familiar refrain was, “You should have,” or “If only you had been truly responsible, you would have done it yesterday.”

One of Mr. Cohen’s children, who shared this story with Rabbi Yochanan Dovid, broke down crying and said:

“We, his children, fall into two categories. One group is made up of the submissive type, who always feel inferior and who take no initiative. They will always walk on the sidelines, lacking self-confidence and absolutely convinced that they’ve done something wrong and that it’s only a matter of time before that wrongdoing is exposed.

The other group is completely uninhibited, insolent, and daring — almost reckless. It’s a psychological mechanism that

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Prerequisite for Critique**

they have built to shield themselves from our father's never-ending fault-finding.

"As for me," the son continued, "I'm part of that first group: submissive, lacking self-confidence, with zero initiative. And now it's time for me to start looking into shidduchim (finding a match), and

I'm terrified of what the future holds; please, Rabbi Solomon — help me."

This week, we will focus on this particular personality type and study Parashat Shelach Lecha with this illustration in mind.

But before we continue, let us pause to reflect for a moment.

**The Prerequisite for Critique**

Observing Mr. Cohen's behavior reveals a very common human phenomenon:

Generally speaking, a person views the reality outside of himself according to the inner world that lies within him.

For example, if a person's inner world is full of joy and positive disposition, he will see the external world as cheerful and welcoming. He will also be capable of trusting others, relying on them, and so on.

If, however, a person's inner world is full of suspicion and anxiety, he will then perceive everyone around him as if

they are out to get him and take something away from him.

In the internal thinking of Mr. Cohen, failure equals the nullification of his very identity: "Would an ideal and exalted individual like me fail?" Consequently, in his mind, there was always only one possibility: He was always right; it was others who were to blame.

This "inner world" is what differentiates one person from another — each individual with their own inner mindset, each with their own "bundle" of issues that they must sort out and rectify in their lifetime.

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Prerequisite for Critique**

Recognizing this is crucial, and once we realize it, we will understand that no one on earth, regardless of who they are, has the right to express criticism or pass judgment on another person unless the critic has achieved what is called 'hitpashtut hagashmiyut' — "shedding one's material orientation."

The concept of 'hitpashtut hagashmiyut' is broad and has countless levels, but for our purposes, we refer to a specific point:

Shedding one's material orientation means the capacity to step out of one's own inner world in order to enter another person's inner world.

So long that I haven't gained that ability — so long as I haven't truly felt the other person's reality — how can I dare criticize him? How could I possibly understand who he really is?

Moreover, it is very likely that once a person succeeds in feeling the inner reality of someone else's inner world, he will be

overwhelmed by profound shame and embarrassment — because it then becomes evident that the other person's inner world may be far more elevated than his own.

Hence, our Sages taught (Pirkei Avot 2:4), "Do not judge your fellow until you have reached his place."

Regarding this, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov taught (Likutei Moharan II, 1):

"Know that whenever a person sits in judgment of his fellow, this is spiritually speaking, an aspect of Rosh Hashanah, which is the Day of Judgment — he is effectively sitting in judgment over his friend.

One must be extremely careful and examine himself well to see whether he is truly worthy of judging his friend, 'for judgment is G-d's alone' (Deuteronomy 1:17). Only He is truly fit to judge a person.

As our holy Sages taught: 'Do not judge your friend until you have reached his place,' and who can truly know or reach his fellow's 'place' aside from G-d,

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Necessary Division of Roles**

for He truly entirely fills the 'place of the world,' though the world does not contain him and 'is not His place.' Each and every individual has a place before G-d, and so only He can judge a person. And since G-d is full of mercy, He surely judges us all favorably, fulfilling the dictum, 'Judge every person favorably' (Pirkei Avot 1:6)."

A true leader is someone who can truly and compassionately enter the inner world of another

person, uplift him, and illuminate his spiritual path.

It is for great leaders of such caliber that our Sages instituted we pray three times a day:

"Restore our judges as in the earliest times and our counselors as at the beginning." Amen, may it be His will !<sup>2</sup>

Let us discuss one more point before we return to Parshat Shelach.

**The Necessary Division of Roles**

Parshat Yitro began with the story of Yitro's arrival in the wilderness to visit his son-in-law, Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses).

Moshe greeted him with great honor and arranged a

meal in his honor. Then Yitro walked around and toured the camp.

While observing and investigating, he noticed — much to his astonishment — that Moshe alone was judging the entire nation

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

2. We do find, on the other hand, the mitzvah of rebuking another person, and there is no contradiction here.

This mitzvah applies when someone has committed a sin or behaved inappropriately, and such rebuke must be given discreetly, modestly, face to face, and in a respectful

manner (as clarified in the relevant laws).

In addition, a further essential condition applies: the one delivering the rebuke must know all the details of the matter thoroughly.

But for one who does not know the issue fully, our Sages have taught: "Do not judge your fellow."

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - Fear and Losing Composure**

from morning until evening. Yitro turned to him and asked:

"What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Why do you sit alone while all the people stand before you from morning until evening? This thing that you do is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and the people who are with you, for this task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone" (Exodus 18:14–18).

Yitro went on to propose a solution: "Choose out of all the people men of valor, G-d-fearing men of truth who despise unjust gain, and appoint them over the

people as officers of thousands, officers of hundreds, officers of fifties, and officers of tens" (Exodus 18:21).

Moshe accepted this advice.

Since, at that time, there were around six hundred thousand men in Israel, Moshe ended up appointing:

600 officers over thousands, 6,000 officers over hundreds, 12,000 officers over fifties, and 60,000 officers over tens.

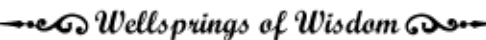
The names of these righteous judges we did not know, apart from a few whose names are recorded in the Torah.

## **Fear and Losing Composure**

The wheel of time spun on, and fourteen months had already passed since the day the Children of Israel left Egypt and began their journey toward the Land of Israel.

Many events and turbulent experiences had transpired in those passing months.<sup>3</sup>

Some of those experiences were longed for and very much desired: The Divine Presence was tangibly revealed, and the Children of Israel beheld miracles, signs, and wonders, and a revelation of the Shechinah rested close by. Their hearts were



3. The following section is based on 'Sefer HaParshiyot' (Bamidbar I, p. 323) by Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov.

filled with a sublime delight, and a pure illumination filled their being beyond all understanding.

Yet at other times in the passing months, the experiences they went through involved great distress: the divine light disappeared from them, trials and tests intensified, and they stumbled into sin after sin — one greater than the other — leading them to feel despondent and despaired. They were alarmed and worried about what tomorrow would bring.

This was the general pattern during the period of time in the desert.

But in the second year, during the 14<sup>th</sup> month after leaving Egypt, a series of back-to-back trials created one prolonged, difficult ordeal:

The 355 days of encampment at the foot of Mount Sinai had come to an end, on the twentieth

of Iyar, the Cloud of Glory lifted — this being the sign that it was time for them to set out on their journey.

Thus, it is written: "In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the Cloud ascended up from over the Tabernacle of the Testimony. And the Children of Israel set out on their journeys from the Wilderness of Sinai, and the Cloud rested upon the Wilderness of Paran" (Numbers 10:11–12).

Thus, they began to travel toward the Land of Israel, and because G-d wished to bring them into the Land of Israel without delay, He caused them to traverse in one day, a route that would ordinarily have taken three days.<sup>4</sup>

Yet instead of offering praise and gratitude, the people complained:

"And the people complained wickedly in the ears of G-d, and

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**4.** To quote Rashi (Numbers 10:33):  
 "‘A three-day journey’ — they traveled in a single day a distance that

usually takes three days to traverse, for the Holy One, blessed be He, wished to bring them into the Land immediately."

Parshat Shlach Lecha - Fear and Losing Composure

G-d heard, and His anger was kindled, and the fire of G-d burned among them, and consumed at the edge of the camp" (Numbers 11:1).

G-d was angered by their complaint. The whole purpose why He had rushed them ahead was for their own benefit — to hasten their arrival so that within just a few days they could already enter the Land of Israel.

But they failed to appreciate this tremendous favor that G-d was bestowing upon them and instead seized upon it as an excuse and as a cause for complaint.

The outcome of this complaint was tragic, and as Rashi comments (Exodus 24:10), because of the people's complaint, they were punished, and the Elders of Israel died.

The Jewish people had barely recovered from the Elders'

deaths when a second complaint arose.<sup>5</sup> As it is written:

“And the mixed multitude among them had great desire; and the Children of Israel also wept and said: ‘Who will feed us meat? We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for free, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all; we have nothing but this manna to look to’” (Numbers 11:4–6).

In other words, the “mixed multitude” (the *erev rav*) complained that they were constantly eating manna and longed for meat and other delicacies, and this complaint also brought about a punishment.

Following this incident (and the following consequences, as articulated in the verses), G-d commanded Moshe:

“Gather for Me seventy men of the Elders of Israel, whom you

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5. Rashi (Shabbat 116a) interprets that "those who turned away from following G-d" that was said is this context, refers to the mixed multitude

that, within three days of traveling, began complaining about the lack of meat, inciting the nation to rebel against the Holy One, blessed be He.

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - Sending of the Spies**

know to be the Elders of the people and its officers, and bring them to the Tent of Meeting, and let them stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take from the spirit that is upon you and will place it upon them” (Numbers 11:16–17).

The original Elders had passed away in the prior punishment, so now G-d told Moshe to gather seventy Elders from all of the tribes of Israel and that He would confer upon them a share of Moshe's spirit so that they could bear the nation's burden of leadership together with him.

That same day, prophecy rested upon two of the Elders who had remained in the camp — Eldad and Medad, and they prophesied: “Moshe will die, and Yehoshua will bring the Jewish people into the Land of Israel.”

Moshe heard this prophecy and did not deny it; it was true.

Then, twenty-nine days later, On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Sivan, Miriam spoke negatively about Moshe, as a result of which she became leprous and was sent out of the camp.

The Israelites waited seven days for Miriam until she could return and join them on their journey onward.

The tension in the Israelite camp mounted. They were very close to the border of the Land, yet everything seemed in disarray: Eldad and Medad had declared that Moshe would die before entering the Land. If so, very soon, Moshe would die or otherwise ascend to Heaven, and there would be no one to guide them. Moreover, they had sinned against G-d repeatedly in the most recent days — sin after sin.

Were they even worthy of entering the Land at all?

Darkness and utter confusion gripped their hearts.

**Sending of the Spies**

This loss of composure caused the Jewish people to

be unaware and oblivious to the importance of the

Parshat Shlach Lecha - Sending of the Spies

divinely appointed division of roles.

As Moshe later recounted:

“All of you approached me and said, ‘Let us send men ahead of us to search out the Land for us and bring back word as to the route we will go upon, and the cities we shall come to’”  
(Deuteronomy 1:22).

Rashi explains on the words, "All of you approached me": they approached Moshe in a disorderly mob — children disrespecting the Elders, and Elders pushing away the leaders.

Moshe saw this chaos and asked, “My dear Jewish people, what is going on?”

They replied and said that for more than a year now, he had been telling them stories about a mysterious land — a land flowing with rivers of milk and honey, a land with astounding agricultural yields.

They were frightened by the mystery and the unknown, and so they wanted to send spies to

see what was really there and to receive a report back to them.

Moshe agreed to their request and turned to G-d. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him:

“Send for yourself men, and let them scout the Land of Canaan that I am giving to the Children of Israel, a man, an individual from each tribe, you shall send — all of them leaders among them” (Numbers 13:2).

Moshe fulfilled G-d’s word: “Moshe sent them from the Wilderness of Paran, by the word of the L-rd — all of them men who were heads of the Children of Israel” (Numbers 13:3).

Moshe summoned 12 righteous men and assigned them their mission: “Go see the Land, and observe the Land — whether it is good or bad, whether it is fat or lean, and strengthen yourselves and take from the fruit of the Land” (Numbers 13:19–20).

We find in the Baal HaTurim’s commentary that these 12 men

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Inheritance of Calev**

were all ‘officers of fifty’ (judges of the category of 50).

We must understand, however:

There were certainly members of the people of Israel who were of higher rank — since there were 600 officers of thousands and 6,000 officers of hundreds.

Why, then, did Moshe specifically choose those 12 men who were ‘officers of fifty’?

We must also understand another point: Moshe surely knew that the Land G-d had promised was good and bountiful — after all, G-d Himself had attested so. Why, then, did he allow them even the possibility to say of the Land, “It’s bad” or “it’s lean”?

Before we proceed to the answer, let us preface by discussing another aspect of the story of the spies.

### **The Inheritance of Calev**

We all know of the failed outcome of this mission: ten of the spies brought back a negative report about the Land, and only two were righteous and avoided joining their conspiracy. Those two were Yehoshua, son of Nun, and Calev, son of Yefuneh.

The Torah states that the reason Calev succeeded in resisting the plot of the spies was that he went to Hebron and prostrated himself on the graves of the Patriarchs, weeping and praying that G-d grant him the physical and spiritual strength

and fortitude to withstand the counsel of the wicked spies.

In reward, he merited to inherit Hebron, as it is written: "But My servant Calev, because he had a different spirit with him and followed Me wholeheartedly, I shall bring him into the land to which he entered, and his descendants shall possess it" (Numbers 14:24). It is also stated: "And to him, I shall give the Land on which he trod, and to his children because he followed G-d wholeheartedly" (Deuteronomy 1:36).

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Inheritance of Calev**

Our Sages explain (Bava Batra 122b) that the ‘land’ referred to here is the city of Hebron, as it says: “They gave Hebron to Calev, as Moshe had spoken” (Judges 1:20).

The Gemara goes on to clarify that this does not refer to the city of Hebron itself since Hebron was designated as a city of refuge for the Kohanim (as stated in Joshua 21:13). Rather, it refers to the surrounding villages and fields outside of the city limits.

Indeed, after more than forty years, when the Children of Israel entered the Land, Calev took possession of his estate and settled in his territory.

Everything went smoothly until he came to one village that had two names: “Dvir” and “Kiryat Sefer,” and was unable to conquer it. Therefore, he publicly declared that whoever would capture it would receive his daughter named ‘Achsah’ in marriage:

“And from there he went up against the inhabitants of Dvir; the name of Dvir was formerly Kiryat Sefer. Calev said, “To whoever strikes Kiryat Sefer and captures

it, I will give Achsah my daughter as a wife.’ Otniel, son of Kenaz, Calev’s brother, captured it; and he gave Achsah his daughter to him as a wife” (Joshua 15:15–17).

Thus, the Scripture states that the village's original name was Kiryat Sefer, but it was later called Dvir.

Rabbi David Shlomo Eibshitz posed three questions on this episode (‘Arvei Nachal,’ Shelach Lecha, Discourse 2):

1. Why was it that everywhere else was easy to conquer, yet “Dvir” proved to be very difficult to the extent that Calev had to make his declaration?
2. Why does the verse bother informing us of Dvir’s original name (“Kiryat Sefer”)?
3. The most challenging question: Calev announced, “Whoever strikes Kiryat Sefer, I will give my daughter to him as a wife,” although the city's current name was Dvir. So, in effect, the city's name he mentioned no longer matched the condition he set forth — did that not

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Inheritance of Calev**

invalidate the arrangement? And why did he not refer to it by its current name?

Before presenting the resolution of the 'Arvei Nachal,' we can raise an additional related question:

Our Sages interpreted this story of the conquering of "Kiryat Sefer" in a completely different, allegorical way.

They explained (Temurah 16a) that after Moshe's passing, "1,700 cases of inferences by way of 'kal vachomer,' 'gezeirah shavah,' and 'fine points gleaned by the Scribes' were forgotten from the people of Israel," and these forgotten laws were referred to as "Kiryat Sefer."

A period of time later, Calev declared that whoever would restore those forgotten laws (known as "Kiryat Sefer") would receive his daughter as a wife, and Otniel, son of Kenaz, indeed did so.

The question arises: Why only now, upon reaching the border of the town of "Dvir," did Calev

decide to recall and evoke these forgotten laws?

The Arvei Nachal explains this conundrum:

It is known that the very first reality created by G-d — even before any other existence or creature existed — was the Torah itself. It was, in fact, through it that the world was created: "The Torah is the blueprint of the world, and by means of the Torah, the world was brought into being."

Our Sages further revealed that the Land of Israel is inseparably connected to the Torah; every speck of earth in the Holy Land of Israel derives its vitality from a specific portion of the Torah that is associated with it.

When the Jewish people conquered the Land of Israel, they encountered no difficulties conquering most of it because they studied and observed the Torah; hence, the very life force of the Holy Land was in their hands and control.<sup>6</sup>

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

**6.** The Land of Israel draws its vitality from the Torah; consequently,

it leads people toward Torah study, as we clearly witness today in the

Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Inheritance of Calev

But when they arrived at the city of Dvir, they realized that the city's life force was connected with the 1,700 laws that had been forgotten during the period of mourning for Moshe, and consequently, they had no way to capture it.

That prompted Calev to proclaim: "Whoever can recall those laws, known as Kiryat Sefer, I will give him my daughter's hand in marriage."

Otniel, the son of Kenaz rose, and through his incisive analysis

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

Holy Land — may it continue to flourish!

After World War II, when the horrific extent of destruction was revealed, deep mourning gripped the Jewish community in the Land of Israel.

For those immersed in Torah study, it was both physical and spiritual devastation. Nearly all of the great and illustrious Torah scholars of Europe — the Jewish people's spiritual future — were gone.

The United States was still a spiritual desert; fewer than three hundred yeshivah students existed in all of the Land of Israel; and Jews under Arab regimes were oppressed and unable to produce the same Torah scholarship as in the free countries.

Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, the Ponevezher Rav, also grieved personally. He had been in the Land of Israel during the war and did not know the fate of his wife, children, or his many students in Lithuania, all of whom had tragically perished.

In their memory, he resolved to rebuild a yeshivah in Bnei Brak for hundreds of Torah students and began fundraising.

During his travels, the Rav stopped at Kibbutz Yagur. Young kibbutz members were puzzled by his presence — since there was not even a synagogue there — and asked for the purpose of his visit.

Undeterred, he declared his plan to build a 1,500-student yeshivah. The youths scoffed, asking how Torah study of yesteryear could remain relevant now that the Jewish people had their own state that they were involved in building.

But he answered them with affection: "My dear fellow Jews, you are mistaken. This is only temporarily the case."

Seventy years later, at a radio tribute for the kibbutz movement's centennial, a singer admitted that she couldn't be sure that in another hundred years from then, the kibbutz movement would still exist to celebrate two hundred years.

and deep erudition, was able to restore these forgotten laws, as it is said: "Otniel son of Kenaz, Calev's brother, captured it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter" (Joshua 15:17).

Through the power of his sharp thinking and his

connection to the holiness of the Torah, Otniel recovered those forgotten rulings, and no sooner than the laws were recovered, and Dvir was conquered quite smoothly.

Now, after this lengthy introduction, we return to the spies.

### **Men of Penetrating Intellect**

When G-d commanded Moshe to send spies, He said:

"Send for yourself, men, and let them scout the Land of Canaan that I am giving to the Children of Israel" (Numbers 13:2).

Targum Yonatan interprets this command as: "Send for yourself 'men of sharp intellect.'"

Moshe fulfilled G-d's word, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, he dispatched them, as it is written: "Moshe sent them from the Wilderness of Paran by the word of the L-rd; all of them were men, heads of the Children of Israel" (Numbers 13:3).

Here, as well, Targum Yonatan comments: "They were all men of sharp intellect."

The reason for this is clear. The spies were about to walk into a lion's den, so to speak, wandering within hostile enemy territory. As long as they were firmly bound to the Torah, they had nothing to fear; every inch of the Land of Israel would be subjected to them and would protect and cover for them from the enemy.

But, there was a concern that in the course of their mission, they might experience a lapse and forget the Torah, thereby losing the protective shield it provided.

Therefore, G-d said to Moshe: Select spies of keen intellect who can restore forgotten parts of the Torah through analytic study, and then, even if they forget something, they will be able — through sharp reasoning — to

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - Entering G-d's Inner Chambers**

regain it and thereby restore their protective merit.

As it turned out, by Divine providence, those who met this requirement — men of a sharp intellect and a keen mind — were all 'officers of fifty.'<sup>7</sup>

**Entering G-d's Inner Chambers**

As we have written before, the very first spiritual reality created by G-d — before any other being came into existence — was the Torah, and through it, the entire world was created.

Thus, the Torah is the deepest reality in creation.

After selecting them, Moshe entrusted them with their mission and spoke to them about G-d's command.

But before presenting his words to them, we must first cite the holy Zohar.

Yet precisely because of its immense loftiness, the world cannot fully bear its sanctity; nothing in creation can grasp its light, radiance, or the profundity of its secrets. This is true all the more so for human beings; as long as they are clothed in a physical

— *❧ Wellsprings of Wisdom ❧* —

7. The above explanation was offered by Rabbi Yaakov Menachem Langer ('Sheloshah Sefarim Niftachim,' p. 263).

One might ask: If that was so, since Yehoshua was also among the spies and he had this great ability in Torah erudition — why did he not restore the halachot forgotten during the mourning for Moshe through reasoning?

But in fact, this was a punishment, and the possibility of retrieving these laws was withheld from him, as the Gemara (Temurah 16a) relates:

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: "When Moshe Rabbeinu was passing away to the next world, he told his close disciple Yehoshua, 'You may ask me all of your doubts now.'

Yehoshua replied, 'Teacher, have I ever left you for even an hour and gone somewhere else (is there anything you taught that I am not aware of)?'

Immediately, Yehoshua's great strength in Torah learning failed him; and three hundred laws were forgotten, and seven hundred doubts arose in his mind.

body, they cannot completely attain a purely spiritual matter on their own accord.

Therefore, in order to enable people to connect to the Torah, G-d invested the Torah with a “garment” and “body,” and by this means, mankind can seize and take hold of its garment and immerse themselves in the outward form that it takes. Yet beyond that external garment and body, we must recognize that the Torah also possesses an inner dimension.

The aspiration of every Jew should be to enter into that inner dimension of the Torah, just as King David implored: “Open my eyes, that I may behold wonders of Your Torah” (Psalms 119:18).

Thus, the holy Zohar states (Beha'alotcha 152a):

The 'garment' of the Torah refers to its stories — for example, the narratives of Jacob and Laban or of the enslavement in Egypt.

The 'body' of the Torah is its mitzvot and legal rulings.

The 'soul' of the Torah is its secrets and mystical intentions — what a person must focus on when performing each mitzvah.

The Zohar continues: Fools may believe that the Torah's stories are the entirety of Torah itself, that there is nothing beneath the narrative garment; however, such people have no share in the World to Come, for they belittle the Torah's holiness and greatness. Others, who are on a higher level, know that beneath this garment, there is a "body," and they devote themselves to the mitzvot of the Torah. Fortunate are they and their lot.

And there are yet others who have refined themselves to such a degree that they fulfill the verse, “The King has brought me into His chambers” (Song of Songs 1:4), advancing chamber after chamber until they perceive the soul of the Torah — its most inward mysteries and its secrets and hidden meanings.

And this notwithstanding, each person's perception still

remains limited by their spiritual level, being that the inwardness

of the Torah is boundless, just as G-d is infinite.

## The Greatness of the Land of Israel

We have also previously explained that the Land of Israel is intimately “bound” together with the Torah.

Just as the Torah has two aspects — an inner dimension and an outer dimension — so, too, does the Land of Israel. And just as anyone seeking to penetrate the Torah’s innermost depths must overcome forces of impurity, so must one who wishes to feel the holiness of the Land of Israel overcome powers of impurity.

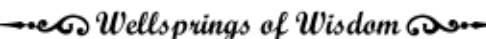
Therefore, Moshe summoned the spies and said to them: "Know that you are about to embark on a mission of reconnaissance in the Land of Israel. Be aware that the Land's holiness is immense, and correspondingly, the 'husks,' the forces of impurity that conceal it, are large and powerful as well.

Of the Land of Israel, it is said: 'Come with Me from Lebanon, My bride; come with Me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amanah, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of leopards' (Song of Songs 4:8).

In the Land of Israel, there are 'lions' dens' and 'leopards' mountains,' seeking to ensnare a person and drag him into the clutches of impurity. Therefore, you all must be vigilant, and the only way to do so is to focus with all of your strength on the Land's inner dimension."

The Imrei Emes of Gur thus explained the verse:<sup>8</sup>

The Chiddushei HaRim of Gur (in 'Sefer HaZechut') explained that with the words "Is it good or is it bad?" (Numbers 13:19), Moshe was exhorting the spies to



8. 'Imrei Emes' (Shelach 5677).

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - Turmoil in the Inner World of the Jews**

look at the inner essence of the Land. Even if it appeared to them as "bad," it was truly and inwardly good. Likewise, "Is it fertile or is it lean?" was an urge for them to look beyond the outer garment.

The same is true of the Torah, concerning which we say, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Torah" (Psalms 119:18), which the Zohar interprets as

"That which lies beneath the Torah's garments." And the Zohar continues to say that, therefore, it says in the verse: "Let us send men ahead of us, and let them search out the Land" (Deuteronomy 1:22), meaning: let them unearth the concealed treasures and spiritual inwardness of the Land.

Thus, Moshe's orientation talk concluded and the spies set off on their mission.

**Turmoil in the Inner World of the Jews**

When the spies arrived at the border of the Land of Israel and peered inside, what they saw struck them like a thunderbolt.

The splendor and majesty, the beauty and power, were unimaginable.

Rivers of milk and honey flowed through rocky channels; the air was perfumed with the fragrance of flowers, producing a kind of inescapable intoxication.

The sky overhead fluctuated in hue between transparent blues and gold-tinged whites,

dotted with gentle, featherlike clouds. Songbirds hovered above them, filling the air with mesmerizing melodies that took one's breath away.

The spies stood there, gazing at each other, and decided to go further and seek out the Land even more.

They went deeper into the Land, and the further they went, the more their amazement grew. They saw strong, oak-like people — towering figures with admiring features — living in elegant

estates, casually conversing in the streets in peace and ease.

Within most of the spies, ten in number, feelings of admiration for these figures began to stir.

Meanwhile, in the camp of the spiritual forces of impurity, there was a great celebration: We've succeeded in evoking admiration in the hearts of the Jews' representatives to the Holy Land; now they belong to us — the rest of the work will be much easier.

We've discussed in the past the powerful impact that sight has on a person's inner world, and this precisely was the cause for the spies' downfall: seeing the grandeur led them to a weakness of heart, an inner sense of surrender before the enemy.

To quote Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler:<sup>9</sup>

"Exile never damaged the soul of the Jewish People in earlier generations; although they needed to flatter their 'captors,'

that flattery had no inner effect. Deep in their hearts, they attributed their plight the solely to Divine decree, nothing more.

In their eyes, the enemies themselves were despicable and contemptible. The crude humiliations and insults their oppressors hurled at them were regarded simply as the doings of foreign actors and wild beasts; the oppressors could never diminish the inner self-respect the Jews held for themselves.

This was true in the early generations; however, in later generations, as our inner stature declined, the value with which we held our enemies rose, and soon we came to feel the ignominy they inflicted on us as real. We therefore strove to emulate them, and it became exceedingly difficult to bear the yoke of their dominance.

Some mistakenly saw this effort to imitate them as a way of 'elevating Jewish honor' and felt embarrassed of their forebears.

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - To The Rescue: The Mitzvah of Tzitzit**

Yet the truth is precisely the opposite. The earlier generations were extremely great in their spirit; they never internalized the baseness of their oppressors.

It was only after we sank lower that our enemies loomed larger in our eyes. We

consequently sank even lower still and found ourselves unable to cope with the burden of exile — Heaven forbid.

This is exactly what the verse implies: ‘We were in our own sight as grasshoppers’ (Numbers 13:33) — and then immediately, ‘and so were we in their sight.’”

**To The Rescue: The Mitzvah of Tzitzit**

After after forty days of scouting the Land, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Av, the spies returned to the Jewish camp with a completely corrupted inner world. They began maligning and badmouthing the Land of Israel, focusing solely on its outer dimension and depicting it according to their inward distortion.

As hard as Yehoshua and Calev tried with all their might to counter the darkness their fellow spies were spreading, they ultimately did not succeed.

After this entire episode occurred, and in the wake of it, G-d gave us the commandment of Tzitzit.

The spies fell and sinned because they focused on the external dimension of the Land.

People fall from lofty spiritual heights precisely because they become accustomed to following only the external appearance of things and forget that behind every “mask” stands G-d, the One who sustains and animates all things.

Therefore, G-d gave Israel the mitzvah of Tzitzit, by whose observance the Jewish People receive the capacity to focus their gaze and direct it only in matters of holiness.

Of the Tzitzit, the Torah says: "And you shall remember all

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Spiritual Virtues of Tzitzit**

the commandments of G-d"  
(Numbers 15:39).

Nachmanides (The Ramban) explains that Tzitzit is considered equivalent to all of the mitzvot together, for it "encompasses" a person and guards them in every way.

The name of the mitzvah, "Tzitzit," hints at its main purpose from the phrase "metzitz min ha-charakim" — "peering through the crevices" (Song of Songs 2:9).

In other words, Tzitzit teaches us to 'peer' and concentrate our sight on G-d and not be divided and distracted in many directions.

Thus, the verse states, "You shall see it" (Numbers 15:39) in the

singular tense, precisely hinting that our entire focus should be on the holy "chariot" — the strand of Techelet (blue thread which would be part of the Tzitzit strands), which resembles the sea, which in turn resembles the sky, which in turn is likened to the Throne of Glory.

By training the power of vision in this way, one attains an inner awareness: "You shall see it and you shall remember" (Numbers 15:39).

Thus, a Jew who takes care to fulfill the mitzvah of Tzitzit properly will be privileged to sense the Divine Presence in a most tangible way.

We will finish our discussion with several details concerning this important mitzvah.

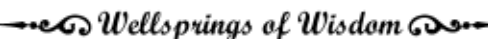
**The Spiritual Virtues of Tzitzit**

The following is an excerpt from a talk by my father, Rabbi Yoram Abargel, on the importance of Tzitzit:<sup>10</sup>

"The practical fulfillment of Tzitzit grants a person outstanding protection from

sin, transgression, or sinful thought.

As our Sages relate (Menachot 44a), there was once a man whose evil inclination overcame him, driving him to the brink of committing a grave sin.



10. 'Imrei Noam' (Shelach Lecha – Ma'amar 8).

## Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Spiritual Virtues of Tzitzit

He went to immense trouble and great expense to make this transgression happen, yet at the last moment, when he was about to stumble and sin, his four Tzitzit corners 'struck him in the face,' causing him to withdraw from the sin.

He merited this because he observed the mitzvah of Tzitzit.

Rabbeinu Bachya (Numbers 15:38) offers a wonderful insight into the uniqueness of Tzitzit:

The corners of the Tzitzit parallel the Heavenly Chariot; just as the Chariot on high is borne by four holy 'beings,' so too, the Tzitzit are bounded by the four corners, on each of which hang eight threads, and each thread itself is made of eight fine strands, making for a total of 256 fine threads (which are the number of the numerous wings of the four creatures of the Divine Chariot).

Thus, when a person dons Tzitzit, he brings upon his soul the light of the Heavenly Chariot, and its immense sanctity shields him from whatever might

compromise his holiness.

A person must exert himself greatly in the adherence of this precious mitzvah, and wear Tzitzit at all times and never remove it.

Likewise, we must train our young children from the age of three and on to wear Tzitzit constantly. By doing so, they will be protected from harm — both physically and spiritually.

If one notices any backsliding in a child's behavior or in his success in Torah study, it is often wise to check the child's Tzitzit to see if perhaps a thread has torn, rendering it invalid and causing the protective holiness it offers to depart.

As soon as the child is once again clothed in a properly kosher Tzitzit, his spirit will, G-d willing, be renewed.

If we pay attention, the Torah section discussing Tzitzit comes immediately after the story of the spies who maligned the Holy Land and deterred the Jewish nation from following G-d's will with perfect faith and wholeheartedness.

Parshat Shlach Lecha - The Spiritual Virtues of Tzitzit

This hints to each of us that by properly fulfilling the mitzvah of Tzitzit — one will certainly be spared from such a misstep as befell the spies. The merit of Tzitzit will guard him from any wrongdoing or sinful thought, enabling him to remain complete and wholehearted with G-d.

Another unique, property that wearing Tzitzit has is alluded to by Rashi's comment on the verse: 'And they shall make for themselves Tzitzit on the corners of their garments' (Numbers 15:38) Rashi connects this verse with the divine protection, 'And I bore you on eagles' wings' (Exodus 19:4). Just as the eagle expresses mercy toward its young, likewise, wearing Tzitzit instills mercy and refined character traits in the hearts of those who wears it.

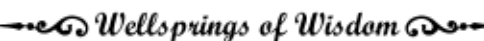
On this basis, we can understand the statement of the Arizal,<sup>11</sup> that Tzitzit has the power to remove anger. This is also hinted at in the numerical value of 'kanaf' (corner), which equals that

of 'ka'as' (anger), 150. Being that Tzitzit brings compassion into a person's heart, that compassion subdues all feelings of anger and enables one to remain patient even toward those who provoke them.

Tzitzit is placed on the four corners of the garment, surrounding a person from all four directions, reminding him to have compassion in his heart wherever and whichever way he may go. In this way, he, too, will be encompassed by the Compassion of G-d in all his affairs.

Jewish women also have a share in the mitzvah of Tzitzit, although they are exempt from wearing it (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 17:2). As the Ben Ish Chai explains (Year I, Parashat Bereishit, 4), they fulfill this commandment by caring for their husbands' and sons' Tzitzit so that they remain presentable and clean and suitable for use.

After washing the garment of Tzitzit, the mother should take



11. 'Pri Etz Chaim' (Sha'ar Kriat Shema, ch. 26).

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - Summary and Practical Conclusions**

care to separate the Tzitzit strands that may have become tangled and check that all of the threads remain intact and valid.

In doing so, she earns a share in the performance of this mitzvah, and the merit of Tzitzit stands by her as a shield and a protector.

Additionally, in the same way that a man achieves spiritual protection and sanctity through the mitzvah of Tzitzit, a woman attains similar protection by observing the laws of modesty in a manner befitting a Jewish daughter, and the more precisely she observes these laws, the greater her merit and reward before G-d.”

**Summary and Practical Conclusions**

1. The faculty of sight exerts a profound influence on a person and can powerfully alter the course of one’s life. When a Jew guards his eyes in accordance with the boundaries set by halachah, he ascends spiritually; but if, G-d forbid, he fails to guard his eyes, he may lose all of his spiritual attainments.

2. Sight has the capacity to alter a person’s inner world. When someone sees a particular reality, even if intellectually he knows that the particular reality is distorted, what he has seen — even if against his will — seeps into his consciousness and causes internal changes.

3. In order to assist the Jewish people with guarding their eyes, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave them the

mitzvah of Tzitzit. Through its power, they receive the strength necessary to keep their gaze focused on holiness.

Tzitzit is equal to all of the mitzvot combined, and it “encompasses” a person and protects him in every way.

A Jew who is meticulous with the mitzvah of Tzitzit will merit experiencing the Divine light shine palpably in his heart.

4. The practical observance of the mitzvah of Tzitzit grants a person powerful protection from sin and transgression, as well as from sinful thoughts. By donning Tzitzit, one brings the light of the Heavenly Chariot upon his soul, and the immense sanctity of this light protects and saves him from anything that might compromise his holiness.

**Parshat Shlach Lecha - Summary and Practical Conclusions**

5. Therefore, everyone should make a great effort to wear Tzitzit at all times and never remove it.

One should likewise educate their young children from the age of three to constantly wear Tzitzit, and in this way, the children will be safeguarded from all harm — both physically and spiritually.

If one notices any regression in a child's behavior or in his success in Torah study, it is advisable to check his Tzitzit to see whether perhaps a thread has torn and rendered it invalid, upon which the sanctifying influence departs and may have allowed for these difficulties to occur.

The moment the child is once again clothed in Tzitzit that is properly kosher,

his spirit will be renewed, and purity will enter his heart.

6. Jewish women, too, have a connection to the mitzvah of Tzitzit, even though they are exempt from wearing it (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 17:2).

They fulfill this commandment by caring for their husbands' and sons' Tzitzit so that they remain presentable, clean, and suitable for use.

After washing the garment of Tzitzit, care should be taken separate the Tzitzit strands that may have become tangled and to check that all of the threads remain intact and valid.

In doing so, she earns a share in the performance of this mitzvah, and the merit of Tzitzit stands by her as a shield and a protector.

**Shabbat Shalom !**



” A person must rejoice when the time for  
**prayer**

as the author of the Tanya says that:

every Jew, wherever he is, receives from G-d at the time of prayer a gift called **"Mochin D'Gadlut,"** meaning that the understanding of everything is expansive before him, as is written  
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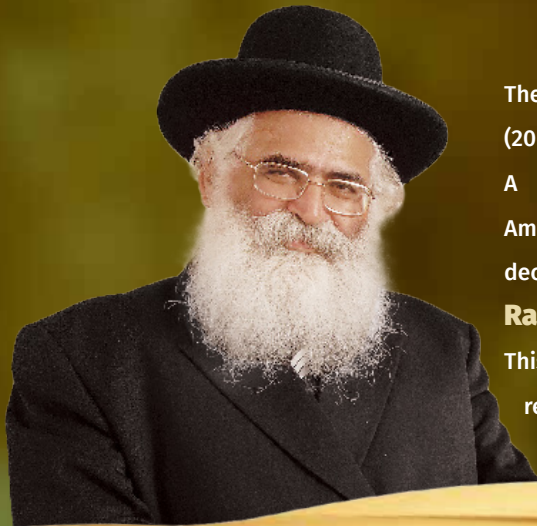
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City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	8:13 pm	9:21 pm	9:43 pm
Miami	7:57 pm	8:54 pm	9:27 pm
Los Angeles	7:50 pm	8:52 pm	9:20 pm
Montreal	8:29 pm	9:45 pm	9:59 pm
Toronto	8:45 pm	9:57 pm	10:15 pm
London	9:03 pm	10:36 pm	10:33 pm
Jerusalem	7:33 pm	8:23 pm	9:19 pm
Tel Aviv	7:30 pm	8:21 pm	9:16 pm
Haifa	7:31 pm	8:25 pm	9:21 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:28 pm	8:21 pm	9:16 pm

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**HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l**

*"And Abraham arose early in the morning and saddled his donkey" (Bereshit 22:3), did Abraham lack servants who could assist him? Abraham was a generational leader and extremely wealthy, but when he received a command from G-d, he left any other preoccupations on the side; this is true love of G-d.*

*When you truly love G-d, nothing else matters in your eyes, not money, time, or prestige.*

*When the time for morning prayers arrives, you will have such great love for G-d that you are ashamed to return to sleep for even one moment, knowing that G-d awaits you.*



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