

CHABAD  
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RESEARCH UNIT

הב

שבת..... *for Friday nights*..... קדש

Friday 31 May 2013 - 22 Sivan 5773  
Sedra Shelach

### THE LESSON FROM JOB

**A FAMOUS NON-JEW HAS A ROLE IN OUR SEDRA<sup>1</sup>, although he is not actually mentioned by name. The Sedra tells us about the Spies being sent to spy out the land of Canaan. According to an opinion in the Talmud<sup>2</sup>, at this time an eminent Canaanite was Job, the central figure in the Biblical Book of Job.**

The significance of this fact is that while Job lived in the land of Canaan, the Jewish people would not be able to conquer it<sup>3</sup>. This is because his righteousness would protect the country - even from the Jewish people! However, when the Spies came, Job passed away and his special protection was gone.

Job was a person who was tested by G-d. He was a good, G-d-fearing person: but now he was being tested. He had been very wealthy, but in one day he lost everything. His first response was to accept this philosophically, but eventually his composure broke down. Surely he was innocent, he complained. Why did this suffering come to him? If only he had never been born!<sup>4</sup>

Then follows a discussion about this between Job and his three friends. This concludes when G-d Himself answers Job. G-d asks him "Where were you when I created the world?"<sup>5</sup>. In other words, how can a finite human being claim the right to understand G-d? G-d is infinite!

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The realisation of the infinity of G-d brings Job to a deeper understanding of the relationship of the individual with G-d.

As explained by the Sages, one aspect of this is “Faith”, *Emunah*, meaning in effect Acceptance. We have Faith and accept that what G-d did was right, even though we cannot understand it with our limited human minds, and may never see the true meaning of what has happened. Perhaps, although the event seems unacceptable in this world, there will be suitable reward in the World to Come.

A deeper level, however, is “Trust” *Bitachon*. We trust G-d to grant us true happiness - in *this* world<sup>6</sup>.

The Book of Job ends with G-d declaring that Job is righteous, and that he has the power to pray on behalf of his friends<sup>7</sup>. All the wealth that Job lost returns to him in double measure<sup>8</sup>.

Job's questions have been asked again and again through the ages, including in our own time. It is not easy to appreciate G-d's answer to him. Job realised that for G-d, “all things are possible”<sup>9</sup>. He had the spiritual strength to trust G-d and go forward.

In the Sedra, the Jews did not believe that G-d would have the power to bring them into the Land. This was irrational on their part, for G-d had brought them out of Egypt and protected them in the desert. Surely He would also be able to fulfil His promise to bring them into the Promised Land! Despite this, they did not believe, and ended up condemned to wander in the desert for forty years.

We ourselves face a rather similar challenge, now close to the conclusion of our long and tearstained journey through the desert of Exile. The Sages of the past century, such as the Chafetz Chaim<sup>10</sup> and later the Lubavitcher Rebbe, told us that we are on the threshold of the Redemption. Our challenge now is to feel trust that “for G-d all things are possible”, and that, as promised in the Torah<sup>11</sup>, He is about to provide a truly happy future for the Jewish people and all humanity.

1. Numbers chaps. 13-15. 2. Bava Batra 15a. 3. See Rashi to Num. 14:9. 4. Job 3:1 ff. 5. Job 38:4. 6. See *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 26, pp. 96-7. 7. Job 42:8. 8. Job 42:12. 9. Job 42:2. 10. Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan of Radun (d.1933), a famous halachist. 11. See Num.24:17, Deut.ch.30.

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### *SEDRA SHELACH*

#### **TAKING CHALLAH**

It was a breezy Thursday evening, when the Silverberg children were sitting around the table eating supper.

“Children,” Mrs Silverberg announced, “I have a special treat for you this week.”

“What is it, Mommy?” little Avi asked. “If you all get your homework done and get yourself ready for bed really fast, you will be able to help me shape the Challah for Shabbat this week!”

The children cheered excitedly. Usually, they bought their Shabbat Challah from the bakery, but this week Mrs Silverberg had decided to bake them herself.

Danny, who was 10, the oldest, hurried up to his room, and filled in his Maths homework sheet as quickly as he was able. He then changed into his pyjamas in record time - 17 seconds!

His younger sisters, Sarah and Dalia, also dashed to their room and came downstairs all ready, seconds after Danny.

Danny, Sarah and Dalia sat themselves around the table after washing their hands, and waited for their mother to come downstairs with three-year-old Avi. Sure enough, she came down soon enough and marvelled at the children’s speed and eagerness. She was very impressed!

Mrs Silverberg brought the bowl of dough to the table from the counter where it was rising, and took off the damp cloth that was covering it.

“Wow, look how smooth the dough is,” Sarah felt the dough gently.

Mrs Silverberg then pulled off a handful of dough, and said a blessing.

“Mommy, what are you saying?” Dalia asked.

“Oh, can anyone guess?” Mrs Silverberg smiled, with a twinkle in her eye.

“I know!” Danny announced proudly, “We learnt it in school this week! Mommy just took off a piece of dough to give to the Kohanim, the priests!”

“Wow, Danny, well done!” Mrs Silverberg patted Danny on the back. “Danny is right. I did take a piece of dough for that reason. That piece of dough is called Challah. But nowadays, unfortunately the Kohen cannot actually eat the Challah. That is because the Challah is holy, and you have to be very pure in order to eat it.”

“I know”, said Danny. “I was going to say that. When Moshiach comes we will give the Challah to the Kohen...”

“So, what do you do with it now?” asked Sarah.

“We still take a piece of dough and we make a blessing over it, and then we burn it in the oven, so that no-one comes to eat it by mistake. This is called ‘taking Challah’.”

The children watched as Mrs Silverberg placed the piece of dough in the oven and turned it up to the highest temperature. “Because of the Mitzvah of taking Challah, we call the Shabbat loaves ‘Challah’,” she said.

“Alright now,” she turned back to the children, “who wants to learn how to make a six-plaited Challah?!”

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