

CREATING SPACE

One of the golden rules we are taught in life is about creating a balance. This is even more pertinent with regard to our relationships with others.

How much do we invest in our relationships with people and what should we expect in return. To what extent do we impose the way we think and feel on others. How much space should we give the people who are very close to us and for whom we feel responsible.

As with everything in life things tend to fluctuate. In relationships this is also the case. At different phases one person in the relationship plays the more dominant role. This does not mean that the other party is relegated to play a less significant part, only that a different and more subtle role is now required.

In this week's Torah portion we read about a major transition in the dynamic of the relationship between man and G-d. Perhaps one could even divide Jewish history into two parts; before the story of the spies, related in this week's portion, and after.

As the Jewish people were on the verge of realising their long held dream of entering the land of Israel, they were overcome with doubt and wanted to take a more cautious approach. They decided that they wanted to conduct their own investigation so that they could make their own judgment about the virtues of the land they were promised by G-d. In his epic response - that reverberates throughout the ages - G-d said to Moses, "**Shelach Lecha**" (send for yourself). In other words, instead of G-d being deliberate with his people, G-d says, let my people do as they think is right.

It is with this statement at this critical juncture in our history, that G-d is teaching all of us a fundamental lesson on how to nurture and develop a healthy relationship. Whilst it is certainly important to impart our thinking and feelings on others, it is also equally important to allow them to develop their own independent personalities. This can only be achieved by ceding control of the relationship and giving the other party the space necessary to grow.

We all seek to impose our own personalities on others, and no doubt we have the best intentions. We want to give all that we have to those with whom we are close. However, notwithstanding the feeling of love that is accompanied with this approach, we are only thinking about the relationship as it exists on our terms. It is only when we step back for a moment and allow the other party to express themselves independently that we can truly experience and enjoy a rich and genuine relationship.

By Yosef Vogel

Friday 15th June

Sh'lach Le'cha (Mevorachim Hachodesh)

26 Sivan 5772

Shabbat Begins: 9.05 pm

Shabbat Ends: 10.26 pm