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NEWSLETTER LITE: As there is very little Yeshiva news during the "Bein Hazmanim" break the newsletter will be going "lite" until Yeshiva resumes in Elul.

Rav Nebenzahl on Parshat Shlach

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

BEING WORTHY OF *ERETZ YISRAEL*



A NEGATIVE REPORT

Parshat Shlach begins with the *meraglim's* negative report regarding *Eretz Yisrael*: "we cannot ascend to that people for it is too strong for us" (*Bamidbar* 13:31). Yehoshua and Caleb, two spies who oppose this report, react by declaring: "*tova haaretz meod meod*" "the land is very, very good" (*Bamidbar* 14:7). They then attempt to reason with the people: "If Hashem desires us, He will bring us to this Land and give it to us, a Land that flows with milk and honey" (*ibid.* 8). If Hashem wishes to bring us into *Eretz Yisrael* then we must place our faith in Him.

How are we to understand the attitude of the *meraglim* and the general population? Did they really believe that it was beyond Hashem's capability to conquer *Eretz Yisrael*? It had been only little over a year since the exodus from Egypt, the memories of the great miracles should have still been fresh in their minds. They had witnessed ten plagues culminating with the deaths of all of Egypt's firstborn in a single moment. Did they really believe that Hashem was unable to perform similar miracles in *Eretz Yisrael*?

Moshe recalls this period in the beginning of *Sefer Devarim*: "all of you approached me and said: 'let us send men ahead of us and let them spy out the Land, and bring word back to us'" (*Devarim* 1:22). Moshe then recalls the spies' report to which the people reacted: "because of

Hashem's hatred for us did He take us out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorite to destroy us" (ibid. 27). Did they truly believe that Hashem took them out of Mitzrayim because He hated them? If Hashem wished to destroy us did He need to bring about the ten plagues, split the sea, bring us manna from heaven, orchestrate the victory over Amalek, and perform the ultimate miracle of speaking to the Jewish nation from Heaven and giving them the greatest gift of all - the Torah? Does this sound like hatred?

Rashi comments: "that which is in your heart about your friend is what you think is in his heart about you". If the Jewish people felt that Hashem hated them, it could only be because they really hated Him, G-d forbid. They justified this hatred by claiming that Hashem wished to kill them. In my humble opinion, this explanation is equally difficult - why would they hate Hashem after all He had done for them? Perhaps they realized what Hashem had done for them, but did not wish to be obligated to express gratitude by praying to Him and becoming His servant. To absolve themselves of any such obligation they had to show that what Hashem did for them was purely out of hatred. According to this explanation, they were fully aware of the truth of all of Moshe Rabenu's statements in praise of Hashem, however they did not wish to express gratitude.

WOULD THE MIRACLES CEASE?

I once came across the following explanation: while the people witnessed great miracles in Egypt and in the desert they were afraid that once they arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* the miracles would cease and life would be run in accordance with the laws of nature. The spies and the nation believed that they had no chance of conquering the mighty nations residing in the fortified cities of Canaan, without the assistance of Hashem's miracles. Although some commentaries maintain that there were more and greater miracles in *chutz la'aretz* than in *Eretz Yisrael*, the evidence appears to be to the contrary. There may have been times throughout history in which miracles were performed outside of the Land, such as *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, but Divine Revelation is more prevalent in *Eretz Yisrael*, especially in the *Beit HaMikdash*. One of the unique aspects of *Eretz Yisrael* is that the Divine Presence is felt.

Had the people not sinned in the incident of the spies, they would have merited immediate entry into the Promised Land lead by Moshe Rabenu. Rashi writes that they would have entered the Land immediately without any use of weapons. Ultimately Moshe Rabenu did not lead them into *Eretz Yisrael* and they required weapons, yet their entry into the Land did involve great miracles

such as the splitting of the Yarden and the tumbling of the walls of Yericho. In addition, Yehoshua declared "*shemesh beGivon dom veyare-ach be-Emek Ayalon*" "sun, stand still at Givon and moon, in the valley of Ayalon" (Yehoshua 10:12) and the sun and the moon stood still. We cannot even imagine the miracles that would have been performed for us had Moshe Rabenu been our leader at the time.

I find it very difficult to accept the explanation that the people feared that there would be fewer miracles in *Eretz Yisrael*. Perhaps their *yetzer hara* convinced them of this, but as we just mentioned, the Land was conquered through so many great miracles, and there would have been even more had they had the benefit of Moshe's leadership.

LEST THE LAND DISGORGE YOU

The Torah informs us that the Land cannot tolerate evil and the lack of heading Hashem's commandments. The Jewish people are warned that they must not act in the abominable ways of the Canaanites that preceded them: "let not the land disgorge you for having contaminated it, as it disgorged the nation that was before you" (*Vayikra* 18:28). The Land wished to spit out the Canaanites and replace them with *tzaddikim*. Perhaps Am Yisrael felt that they were not on a sufficiently high level to inhabit the Land. Yehoshua in fact spoke to the people prior to crossing the Yarden and informed them that their purpose in crossing the river was to rid Eretz Yisrael of the Canaanites and their *avoda zara*. He warned them that if they did not act properly, the water would sweep them away. They understood that the Land could not tolerate people who were not worthy and they believed themselves to be unworthy of remaining in the Land.

Exile is a punishment, as we recite on Yom Tov: "*mipnei chataenu galinu me-artzenu*" "because of our sins we have been exiled from the Land." Exile, however, also affords us protection. As we mentioned, we cannot remain in *Eretz Yisrael* if we do not follow the ways of the Torah. *Eretz Yisrael* spat out the Canaanites and it could just as well have spat out the Jewish people. The only way to remain alive was to go into exile. Exiling them therefore was for the people's own good, it saved them from destruction. Of course it would be better to follow the dictates of the Torah and not need to be exiled, but in the event that we do not act as we should, it is better that we remain in exile than in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Perhaps this is what was going through the minds of the *meraglim* when they returned with the report that they

would be unable to remain in the Land. The Ramban writes that the cities of Sodom and Amora were destroyed because they were in *Eretz Yisrael*. *Chutzla'Aretz* is home to many decadent cities, but the Land of Israel cannot tolerate the presence of evil people. In *Eretz Yisrael* punishment for such sins is immediate. In *Chutz la'Aretz* people would be punished as well, but not immediately. This was the nation's fear - that they did not possess the merit of remaining in the Land.

A LACK OF FAITH

When the spies returned from their mission and related what they saw: "The entire assembly raised up and issued its voice; the people wept that night" (*Bamidbar* 14:1) - "Rabbah observed in R' Yochanan's name - it was the night of the ninth of Av and the A-lmighty said to Israel: You wept in vain, therefore I will establish it for you as a time of weeping for all generations" (*Sanhedrin* 104b) - referring to the two destructions that were destined to occur on that day. How does Moshe, at a later stage, refer to the sin of the spies? "Yet in this matter, you do not believe in Hashem, your G-d" (*Devarim* 1:32) - the people lacked faith that Hashem could overpower the fortified cities and the giant inhabitants that the spies came across during their tour of Israel. It was this lack of faith that caused them to weep that night and for many generations thereafter.

Their unwillingness to follow Hashem to the Land was responsible for the destruction of both *Batei Mikdash*. *Eretz Yisrael* yearns for the presence of those who learn Torah and keep the mitzvoth. Most of you are planning to spend your *bein hazmanim* in *chutz la'aretz*, but remember that the home of a Jew is *Eretz Yisrael* especially for people who are learning in Yeshiva. May we merit remaining in *Eretz Yisrael* and finally witnessing the building of the *Beit HaMikdash* speedily in our day. Amen.

Kollel Dvar Torah
by Rav Atzmon Asherov

"UNDERSTANDING THE SIN OF THE MERAGLIM"

Parshat Shlach begins with the tragic story of the spies which left a lasting impression for future generations.

The *parsha* begins with Hashem commanding Moshe Rabenu: "send forth men, if you please, and let them spy out the Land of Canaan" (*Bamidbar* 13:2). Although the Torah writes that Hashem commanded Moshe to send the spies, this incident is recalled in the book of *Devarim* as being the people's initiative: The people requested from Moshe: "let us send men ahead of us and let them spy out the Land" (*Devarim* 1:22). Hashem had already promised the Jewish people that He

would bring them into "to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey" (Shmot 3:8), why then must they send a team to investigate the Land? This, however, was what the people wanted and Moshe was therefore commanded: "send forth for yourself - 'by your discretion, I do not command you to do so'" (Rashi citing the Midrash).

Moshe Rabenu then sent the spies with the tragic result we all are familiar with - the Jewish people did not wish to enter the Land and the terrible decree was issued that they were to spend forty years wandering in the desert until the last of that generation would die. Only their offspring would have the privilege of entering *Eretz Yisrael*.

What was the exact nature of the sin of the spies and the Jewish nation in general? A glance at the simple understanding of the *psukim* reveals that the spies did precisely as they were told. Moshe Rabenu commanded them in the Name of Hashem: "ascend here and climb the mountain, see the Land - how is it? And the people that dwells in it - is it strong or weak? Is it few or numerous? And how is the Land in which it dwells - is it good or is it bad? And how are the cities in which it dwells - are they open or are they fortified? And how is the land - is it fertile or is it lean? Are there trees in it or not?" (*Bamidbar* 13:17-20) and this is precisely what they did. They were given instructions down to the last detail and they carried them out. They arrived in the Land only to find great giants: "there were Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the offspring of the giant ... the cities are fortified and very great" (*Bamidbar* 13:22, 28). Is it not natural to be frightened at such sights? Is not natural for them to wonder how one people could possibly conquer seven powerful nations dwelling in a fortified land - if not impossible, it certainly was not going to be easy.

We then read of the return of the spies: "they returned from spying out the Land at the end of forty days" (*Bamidbar* 13:25), they reported all that they saw in the Land. They began their report by acknowledging the greatness of the Land: "we arrived at the Land to which you sent us and indeed it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit" (*ibid.* 27). However, they then continued: "but - the people that dwells in the Land is powerful, the cities are fortified and very great and we also saw there the offspring of the giant" (*ibid.* 28). They reported things exactly as they saw them - a powerful people, fortified cities, and giants.

If everything they described was the absolute truth, then why did Hashem punish them, what was so sinful about their behavior? After all, they were sent to see whether: "the people that dwells in it, is it strong or is it weak ... is it good or is it bad?" (*Bamidbar* 13:18, 19). Did they not relate things precisely as they saw them?

Their sin, as many commentaries have explained, was the conclusions which they drew based on their findings. Were the inhabitants strong? Yes, they were strong. Were there high walls and fortified cities? That was also true and whoever wanted to could investigate for himself and prove the veracity of these claims. It seems only natural to become frightened and entertain all sorts of thoughts - how are we going to manage?

We must not forget that these spies lived in the generation of the desert, they had been in Egypt and witnessed ten miraculous and unusual plagues. If Hashem was able to cause an upheaval in the laws of nature in Egypt, why should He not be able to do the same thing and defeat the inhabitants of the Land? They witnessed Hashem's power and strength. They saw the Yam Suf as well as all the waters in

the world being split. If Hashem promised to lead the Jewish nation into *Eretz Yisrael*, why must they question His ability to do fulfill this promise? Is Hashem afraid of giants and fortified cities? The Jewish nation up until that point had been lead by Hashem's Divine Providence, Hashem held them by the hand like a father cares for the child he loves.

The spies reported things precisely as they saw them, their error was in their negative interpretation. Their lack of belief in Hashem colored their view and we would have expected much more from people who had witnessed all the great miracles in Egypt and the exodus.

The concluding *psukim* of the *parsha* therefore warn us: "*velo taturu acharei levavchem veacharei eineichem*" "that you may see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem and perform them" (*Bamidbar* 15:39) - don't view things only through the lens of the naked eye for such an interpretation is not based on faith. We must rather wear "glasses" of faith, as the concluding *pasuk* states: "*ani Hashem Elokeich asher hotzeiti etchem me-Eretz Mizrayim lihyot lachem, ani Hashem Elokeichem*" "I am Hashem your G-d Who has removed you from the land of Egypt to be a G-d unto you; I am Hashem your G-d" (ibid. 41).

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List Announcements from the Yeshiva

Mazal Tov:

The Yeshiva would like to wish a Mazal Tov to:

- Gilia Bar-Or on the birth of a great granddaughter.
- Geoffrey (5756-5757) and Danielle Dworkin on the birth of a baby boy Shia Benjamin Shiloh.
- Daniel Raymond (5765-66) on his marriage to Rachel Jacob, sister of Ovadiah Jacob (5759-60), Shimshon Jacob (5762-63) and Yaacov Jacob (5765-66).
- Elan (5761) and Keren Schneider on the birth of a baby girl, Temima Adina.
- Mark Nakash (5765-66) on his engagement to Miryam Bunick. *.Mabrook!*
- Joseph Harary (5765) on his marriage to Frieda Benun.
- Dr. Alan (5739) and Rozy Nevies on the marriage of their son.
- Steven Parilis (5765) on his engagement to Erica Zimmerman.
- Ari Strulowitz (5766-67) on his engagement to Avigayil Prero.
- Michael and Ariana Bernstein on the birth of a baby girl.

Visitors:

The following people have visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Michael Nahmias (5761-62)
- Daniel Lowenstein (5764-65)

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Taube Yehudit bat Temma Gasia

- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel
- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Nachum Tzvi ben Ratza
- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly bat Yaerah
- Miriam Naomi bat Sarah
- Yehudis Sara bas Esther
- Dov Eliyahu ben Mindel Hudis
- Rahamim ben Miriam
- Hinda bat Sara Leah
- Rivka Zelda bat Bracha
- Miriam Leba bat Esther
- Dovid Ben Miriam
- Yaackov Chaim Meir ben Miriam
- Avraham ben Leah
- Chaim Naftali Yaakov ben Shifra Shaulah
- Michael Yosef ben Tzipora
- Gidon Shlommoo ben Esther
- Haya Rebecca Rivka bat Jeanne Yaffa
- Temima Adina bat Keren Ronit

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh | Western Wall Plaza | One Hakotel Street | POB 32017 | Jerusalem | 91319 | Israel