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Rabbi Yissocher Frand

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Rabbi Frand on Parshas Sh'lach

The Connection Between The Beginning and the End of the Parsha

This parsha begins with the story of the sending out of the Spies, and ends with the mitzvah of Tzitzis [fringes on the corners of a four-cornered garment]. There is a word that is used several times in this parsha, in different grammatical formulations, that is a rather uncommon word in the Torah overall. In the beginning of the parsha, the verse reads, "Send out men that they might spy out (v'yasuru) the Land of Canaan" [Bamidbar 13:12]. That same word is used at the end of the parsha in the mitzvah of Tzitzis. "And you shall not stray (v'lo sasuru) after your hearts and eyes that lead you astray" [Bamidbar 15:39].

This irony is not lost on Rashi or on any other classic Torah commentary. It is too striking to be overlooked. Rashi comments: The heart and the eyes are "spies" for the body, procuring sins for it. The eye sees, the heart desires, and the body sins. In other words there is a deep connection between the tragic mission of the spies and the warning aga inst straying after one's heart and eyes.

The Shemen HaTov suggests that there is a more profound connection. Rashi uses the expression "the eye sees and the heart desires (ha'ayin ro-eh v'halev chomed)." If indeed the sequence is that the eye sees, the heart desires, and then the body sins, why doesn't the pasuk [verse] read: "you shall not stray after your eyes and your heart"? The sequence of the pasuk is the reverse -- "you shall not stray after your heart and after your eyes!"

Apparently it does begin in the heart! How so? The answer is that all of us were born with a conscience. For most of us that conscience is still active.

Before we do something we are not supposed to do, our conscience gives us problems. A little voice in our head announces: "Don't go there. Don't do this. This is not for you. Stay away."

How do we get beyond that nagging voice? We get beyond that nagging voice using our uncanny ability to rationalize. We rationalize the voice away. We can make up the greatest excuses and we can turn virtually every sin into a mitzvah. "I need it. I have to have it. I'm down. I'm depressed. I'm poor. I'm this, I'm that, whatever. It will be good for me."

This is what we do. To accomplish this rationalization we need a heart. We need the heart-triggered process to somehow turn that sin into a mitzvah. This is the sequence of "do not stray after your hearts and your eyes." True, as Rashi says, it physically starts with the eyes. But psychologically it must go first through the heart. The heart has to "permit it" for us through its illogical process of rationalization.

This is precisely what happened with the 10 spies (all except for Yehoshua and Kalev). They were sent on a mission to view Eretz Yisrael. They all came back with a negative report. What was their problem? Why did they view everything that could have been viewed in a positive light, in a negative light instead? The answer, the commentaries tell us, is that they rationalized.

Either they saw themselves in a position of leadership and sensed that when they were settled in Eretz Yisrael they would lose that leadership, or life in the desert was too cozy. They would get up in the morning and find their Mann. They did not need to worry about their clothes wearing out. They did not need to worry about shelter. They did not need to worry about digging or planting. They did not need to worry about farming or earning a living. In the Wilderness, they were worry-free. Such a life was not easy to give up.

Whatever their logic, it was their rationalization and their fear -- all triggered by their heart -- that perverted their actions. This is the connection between the words "v'yasuru es Eretz Canaan" at the beginning of the parsha and the "v'lo sasuru achrei levavchem v'achrei eineichem" at the end of the parsha.

We need to be constantly on guard lest our hearts stray and turn -- through rationalization -- every sinful matter into a mitzvah.

This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic portions for this parsha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are: These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #597, Davening at the Graves of Tzadikim Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org> for further information.

From:"TorahWeb.org" <torahweb@torahweb.org> date Jun 19, 2008

Subject Rabbi Mordechai Willig - Do Not Stray After Your Eyes

[http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2008/parsha/rwil\\_shlach.html](http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2008/parsha/rwil_shlach.html)

**Rabbi Mordechai Willig**

**Do Not Stray After Your Eyes**

I

"You shall not stray (V'lo sasuru) after your heart and after your eyes" (Bamidbar 15:39). The heart and the eyes are spies for the body. The eye sees, the heart desires, and the body commits the sin (Rashi).

The Torah places the heart before the eyes, but Rashi reverses the order, stating that first the eye sees, and then the heart desires. Perhaps the heart does two things- one prior to seeing and a second, after. First, the heart strays[1]. As a result, the eyes stray, as natural curiosity takes over. This is then consistent with the order in the pasuk, as "The eyes follow the heart" (Medrash Tehillim 14:1).

Much of the expanded range of vision presented by natural curiosity is benign. Nonetheless, inevitably one's lust is aroused by what the eye sees, and at that point, the heart desires. Occasionally, a person cannot control these desires, and the body sins, as Rashi explains[2].

## II

"You shall guard yourself (vnishmarta) against any evil thought' (Devarim 23:10). A man may not gaze upon a beautiful woman even if she is unmarried" (Avoda Zara 20a).

Why isn't the violation of "v'lo sasuru - you shall not stray" mentioned here? The Smak (30) answers that "v'lo sasuru" applies only when one stares for the purpose of an immoral act. If one enjoys the beauty of a woman, but has no intention to commit an immoral act, he violates "vnishmarta". This distinction is reached independently by the Igros Moshe (Even Hoezer 1:69)[3]. However, the Mishna Berura (75:7) states that staring at a woman to enjoy her beauty is a violation of "v'lo sasuru". Perhaps this is the Rambam's position as well (see Sefer Hamitzvos, Lo Saaseh 47), that one who is pulled after physical lusts and a preoccupation with them violates v'lo sasuru, even if no sinful act is contemplated.

## III

"If women are not properly dressed near a river, one who has an alternate route but chooses the river route is termed a rasha. If there is no alternative, he must force himself to avert his gaze"(Bava Basra 57a).

This passage has tremendous relevance nowadays, especially in the summer months. Men must avoid, if possible, walking in places where women are not dressed properly. When a man must walk in such a place to reach his destination, every effort must be made to avoid focusing on forbidden sights. Unfortunately, in most workplaces this vigilance must be maintained all day. (This vigilance includes avoiding prohibited internet sites.)

It is important to note that women are also included in the prohibition of v'lo sasuru if they gaze upon men with the intention to sin (Igros Moshe, ibid.). In addition, women may not wear clothing that reveals their upper arms or thighs (Mishna Berura 75:2), and certainly not any part of their torsos. The ubiquitousness of low-cut garments does not permit one to wear them. Tight-fitting clothing, which accentuates a woman's figure inappropriately, is strictly prohibited (see Az nidberu by Rav Binyomin Zilber). These laws reflect the requirement of tznius (modesty), as well as the interdiction of placing a michshol (stumbling block) in the path of men. In choosing their wardrobe, women must summon the strength to be discerning, and not to slavishly follow current fashion.

Other methods of arousing the male sexual desire are also forbidden, and can produce disastrous results. The Gemara (Yoma 9b) relates that women would entice young men by releasing perfume in their presence. This was a cause of the churban Beis Hamikdash. Even excess conversation, which can lead to levity, can be disastrous (see Avos 1:5).

In sum, both men and women must focus on resisting these behaviors, so typical of general society, and must govern their thoughts, sights, words/conversations, wardrobes, and deeds according to Torah law.

"If one sees a provocative sight (dvar erva) and does not allow his eyes to enjoy it, he merits to see the Shechina, as it is written, (Yeshaya 33:15 - 17) 'One who shuts his eyes from seeing evil shall dwell in heights and see the King in His splendor'" (Derech Eretz Rabba, 1). If we control ourselves, and do not stray after our hearts and eyes, we will be rewarded for keeping this difficult, yet critical, mitzva.

[1] One's heart should be totally dedicated to serving Hashem, as the Torah states, "You shall Love Hashem with all your heart" (Devarim 6:5). One who serves Hashem wholeheartedly is able to focus all of his senses in a single-minded effort to do good and avoid evil. If we allow our heart to stray, this ability is lost.

[2] The Gemara (Berachos 12b) states, "'After your heart' - this is heresy, akin to Avoda Zara. 'After your eyes' - this is sinful thoughts", in particular lust for women. At first glance, this statement is at odds with Rashi's interpretation which is found in Medrash Tanchuma. Rashi projects a progression: a straying heart leads to a straying eye. The Gemara refers to two totally separate sins" heresy and sinful thoughts. However, one may view a seemingly innocent straying heart, a lack of focus on loving Hashem, as a mild form of heresy, and even as containing traces of avoda zara. If one walks in the way of his heart and the vision of his eyes (Koheles 11:9), there is no law and no Judge (Medrash Raba). One who makes no effort to

contain his thought inevitably sees prohibited sights. Carelessness in these areas reflects a lack of constant awareness of Hashem the Judge. This shortcoming smacks of heresy and avoda zara.

[3] This view is supported by the proof text of the aforementioned Gemara (Berachos 12b): Shimshon said to his father, "take her for me, for she is fitting in my eyes (Shoftim 14:3). Shimshon acted upon his lustful gaze and married a Plishiti woman.

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### A. BUT THE PEOPLE ARE POWERFUL

The Ramban (Nachmanides) in the beginning of Parshas Shelach struggles to explain what the sin of the Meraglim (spies) was.

The simple understanding of the Chumash is that the Meraglim sinned by saying: "Indeed the Land flows with milk and honey BUT the people that dwell in the Land are powerful" (Efes Ki Az Ha'am) (13:27 28), implying that they would not be able to conquer the Land.

The Ramban, however, asks that how could the Meraglim have been punished for this report if they were sent by Moshe Rabeinu in the first place to: "See the Land how is it, and the people that dwell therein are they strong or weak, few or many" (13:18). The spies were merely doing what they were sent for!

An answer to the Ramban's question, which is implicit in many commentaries, is that the Meraglim were sent not to see whether to conquer the Land but to see the best way to conquer the Land, so that to the extent possible they would not have to rely on miracles. But when they said "But the people are powerful" they implied that Bnei Yisroel would not be able to conquer the Land. And this showed a lack of trust (Bitachon) in Hashem. For Hashem said: Go & conquer the Land. And Bnei Yisroel should have believed that they would be able to conquer the Land.

There is a principle "Ein Somchin Al Hanes" that one should not rely on miracles. However, that principle does not apply where Hashem promised that Bnei Yisroel could conquer the Land. In such a case, as long as Bnei Yisroel make an effort (Hishtadlus) they should be confident that Hashem will help them conquer the Land. So by not believing that they could conquer the Land, they showed a lack of trust in Hashem.

### B. THE SIN OF SLANDERING THE LAND

Rashi in the beginning of the Parsha seems to learn that the sin of the Meraglim was a different one. Rashi says: The story of Meraglim is adjacent to the story of Miriam (at the end of last week's parsha) to show us that Miriam was punished for the slander she spoke on her brother, and the Meraglim saw this and did not take heed.

It appears from this Rashi that the sin of the Meraglim was that they spoke Lashon Hora on the Land.

In fact the Torah in verse 32 states: "And they slandered the Land ... saying: The Land consumes its inhabitants, and all the inhabitants are giants." Rashi states that in fact Hashem caused many Caananites to die so they would be preoccupied with their own mourning, and not notice the spies. The Meraglim failed to understand this, and slandered the Land, saying the Land kills its inhabitants.

The Ramban, however, states that one cannot learn that the sin of the Meraglim was merely that they spoke Lashon Hora because even before the

Torah states in verse 32 that: "they slandered the Land," Caleb silenced the people in verse 20 stating: "We shall surely ascend and conquer the Land."

It appears that Rashi understands that the Meraglim committed two sins, one in that they did not believe that they could conquer the Land stating "But the people are very powerful," which caused Caleb to respond by silencing them stating "We shall surely ascend", and second in that they spoke Lashon Hora on the Land stating "the Land eats its inhabitants."

In fact, we see that there were two sins from the response of Yehoshua and Caleb (14:7 8): "[Yehoshua and Caleb] spoke to the entire Bnei Yisroel saying the Land that we passed through ... is very very good. If Hashem desires us He will bring us to this Land ... a Land flowing with milk and honey."

They countered the Lashon Hora by saying "the Land is very very good," and they countered the lack of trust in Hashem by saying "If Hashem desires us He will bring us to this Land."

### C. COMPARISON TO MIRIAM

Rashi in beginning of the Parsha, quoted above, states that the story of Meraglim is adjacent to the story of Miriam because Miriam was punished for the slander she spoke on her brother, and the Meraglim saw this and did not take heed.

Rashi implies that the Meraglim violated the prohibition of Lashon Hora. It seems strange, however, that there could be Lashon Hora on land?

I would suggest that Miriam's sin was not just for speaking Lashon Hora on Moshe, but also for speaking Lashon Hora on Hashem, as we see from what Hashem told Miriam: "Why did you not fear to speak against my servant Moshe" (12:8). In other words, if Hashem chose Moshe as his servant, then criticizing Moshe is indirectly criticizing Hashem, as if to say Hashem chose a servant who does not know the proper way to serve him. And the same is true with the Land of Israel. Hashem would not choose a Land that was bad. So to slander the Land of Israel is indirectly to slander Hashem, implying that He would choose an inferior Land.

In fact, this is implied by Rabeinu B'Chaye (Rabbi Bachya Ibn Pekudah) who states in last week's parsha that the story of the complainers about the Mon (manna, the heavenly bread the Jews ate in the wilderness) was placed right before the story of Miriam, and in turn the story of Miriam was placed right before the story of Meraglim, because they were all sins of slander. The complainers spoke badly about the Mon, Miriam spoke badly about Moshe and the Meraglim spoke badly about the Land of Israel.

Certainly there is no Lashon Hora on Mon! But the comparison must be that by criticizing the Mon they were indirectly criticizing Hashem who gave it to them. And the same is true of criticizing the servant of Hashem, or of criticizing the Land of Israel.

To conclude, we see that the Meraglim sinned: (i) by speaking badly about the Land that Hashem chose, and not having faith (Emunah) that his choice was a good one, and (ii) by lacking trust (Bitachon) that Hashem would help them conquer the Land.

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Internet Chaburah

Prologue: After the sin of the spies, the cries of the night and God's punishment of the people, the torah describes one of the most interesting responses from a people faced with adversity. Indeed, the Torah describes the story of the Maafilem who rose to conquer the land despite Moshe's warnings. The people got a fervor and scaled the mountain only to be attacked by the Amaleke and Canaanite forces.

One can only learn the episode and be moved to question how these individuals thought they could be successful in the face of God's wrath. How could these people proceed despite Moshe's warning "Hee Lo Titzlach" that they wouldn't be successful? What possessed them to continue despite the warning?

Harav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita (Birkas Mordechai) notes that the people didn't think they would be successful DESPITE Hashem's will. Rather they thought that they would have to bring Hashem around to their thinking. In other words, they thought that through their prayers and actions and through their desires expressed spiritually, they would convince Hashem to change his mind. That is, by demonstrating that the situation was indeed different, that they were a different people, Hashem would determine a new course of action for them including immediate annexation of Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Baruch Mordechai goes much further to discuss the power of Shieefa – of having spirituaql aspiration. He notes its power and its ability to motivate individuals and the nation into monumental moments of strength. Through proper Shieefa a nation can even move mountains and annul the harshest decree.

True, except for one situation – when Hashem doesn't share that Shieefa. When Moshe told the people that "Hee Lo Titzlach" the people needed to re-examine their Sheeifa and note that the desire was not spiritually sound. In that situation it was not the verdict that needed to be revisited but rather the petition. There is a proper means to express truthful spiritual fervor – it involves Mitzva performance. Additional deviation is not spiritual, it is errant.

This week's chaburah examines an instance of the collide between the spiritual desire to observe a Mitzva and the way that Mitzva is performed. It is entitled:

\*\*\*\*\* "Borrowing" Tzitzis \*\*\*\*\*

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 14:4) notes that one is allowed to borrow his friend's Tallis and make a Beracha with it so long as he remembers to return it in the same (folded) manner that he found it. The Mogen Avraham (14:8) notes that this is an incredible idea, likely based on the principle that in general people would prefer Mitzvos to be performed with their finances. Still, without the owner's permission (Daas Makneh) how can one recite a Beracha on the Tallis? After all, without the permission the Tallis is at best borrowed (Tallis Sheulah) which is not obligated in Tzitzis?

The Mogen Avraham answers that even if it is a Tallis Sheulah it might not be OBLIGATED in tzitzis, but one COULD FULFILL the Mitzva of Tzitzis with it. Of course, his position contains two Chiddushim (novel ideas). The first is the concept that one could fulfill a mitzvah with something that is not obligated to have that Mitzva fulfilled upon it (like a Tallis Sheulah). That is an extraordinary idea that needs further clarification. Moreover, how could one recite a Beracha on that mitzvah? After all, according to the Shulchan Aruch (the source for the Mogen Avrohom's idea) a woman may not recite blessings on a Mitzvas Aseh She' Hazman Grama since she is not obligated in these. Why then should he allow a beracha on an item not obligated in the Mitzva?

(HaGaon Harav Osher Weiss Shlita adds that the logic of wanting someone to do a nmitzva with your money ONLY applies when one doesn't need Daas Makneh like when taking the Lulav on the second or later days of Sukkos. But on the first day, when one must own it <for Lachem> there must be Daas Makneh. If so, what happens here where the Mitzva of Tzitzis is on YOUR garment <See Chullin 110>?)

The Rambam (Hil. Ishus 5:8) notes that if there is an item that the owners are not particular about and you pick it up and use it to marry a young woman, there is a potential Kiddushin (Safek Kiddushin) effected. It sounds like the Rambam sees the doubt as to whether the general knowledge that the owners do not care counts as Daas Makneh (See Noda B' Yehuda <Kama, E.H., 159> who notes that it works under the rule of Hefker versus that of the Avnei Miluim, <28:49> who says that it is a direct Haknaah to the individual who picks it up).

Either way, Rav Osher Shlita suggests that in the olden days where personal Tallisim were scarce, when one left a Tallis in Shul, it was understood (Anan Sahadee) that it could be used not occasionally, but regularly. Such regular expectation had a higher status than "not minding", it was more akin to granting permission, or Daas Makeh.

What about today? The Kaf Hachaim (14:4) cautions one against borrowing without permission as much as possible. The Mishna Berurah (14:13) cautions limiting this permission to temporary borrowing (Mekor Chayim: once in 30 days). The Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 14:12) and Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe O.C. V:20) limit the borrowing without permission to where the Tallis is in the Shul or Beis HaMedrash. This position is consistent with Rav Osher's understanding that in Shul there is a Daas Makneh (the idea is also expressed by the Nimukei Yosef <Hil. Tzitzis at the end of Menachos>) but to borrow elsewhere without permission would be forbidden.

L'Halacha, Rav Osher holds that the issue depends on the time and place where the situation arises and in these places the local custom prevails.

Shabbat Shalom

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#### INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF

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Shabbos 75

1) THE "CHILAZON" OPINIONS: According to the Tana Kama in the Beraisa, one who traps ("Tzad") and smashes ("Potze'a") a Chilazon transgresses only one Melachah, the Melachah of trapping. According to Rabbi Yehudah, he transgresses two Melachos, trapping and Potze'a (a Toldah of Dash). One is not Chayav, though, for killing the Chilazon.

Many Acharonim point out that we can infer from the Sugya here a number of distinguishing features of the Chilazon. In addition to these features, there are a number of other distinguishing characteristics of the Chilazon mentioned in the Gemara, Rashi, and Tosfos elsewhere. Based on these Sugyos, is it possible to identify the Chilazon, and thus the Techeles dye? (For a more comprehensive survey of this topic, see Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld's "Torah from the Internet," Shelach 5755, and see the special TECHELES SECTION of the Dafyomi Advancement Forum.)

(a) To address this question, we shall first list the characteristics of the Chilazon mentioned in the Gemara here and in other Sugyos.

The species: The first group of features describe the species of the Chilazon.

1. The Beraisa in Menachos (44a) says that "its creature is like a fish."

2. The Gemara earlier (74b) says that the Chilazon is captured with nets lowered into the water.

3. The Gemara here (75a) says that one is Chayav for Tzad (trapping) when he captures the Chilazon on Shabbos. This implies that the Chilazon is not a creature that is easy to catch, but rather it is a creature that runs away when one tries to catch it. We know that the Melachah of trapping applies only when one captures an animal that is able to flee and that tries to run away when it is being hunted (Beitzah 24a).

4. TOSFOS here (DH ha'Tzad) infers from the Gemara that one who removes a Chilazon from the sea on Shabbos is not held liable for killing it ("Netilas Neshamah") even if he allows the Chilazon to become partially dry (this is because the Chilazon does not die immediately upon being removed from the water, but it jumps around a bit. This is in contrast to the Halachah that one who removes a fish from water is considered to have killed it as soon as it becomes partially dry, since it will certainly die (Shabbos 107b). Apparently, there is some difference between the Chilazon and other sea creatures in this regard.

5. The Gemara discusses one who "smashes" ("Potze'a") a Chilazon to extract its dye. The word "Potze'a" implies cracking or pounding a hard surface, such as a person's bones or skull (Shemos 21:25, Sanhedrin 82a), or a nutshell or branch

(Beitzah 34a), as opposed to "Kore'a" (ripping). From the use of this word to describe what is done to the Chilazon to extract its blood, it seems that the Chilazon has some sort of hard shell which needs to be "cracked open."

The details of the Chilazon: The next group of features describe specific traits of the Chilazon.

6. The Beraisa in Menachos (44a) says that the Chilazon's body is like the sea (according to the text of the Beraisa in Maseches Tzitzis, its body is like the sky). This implies that the body of the actual creature has a bluish hue.

7. The Beraisa there says that "it comes up once every seventy years," or, according to the text in Maseches Tzitzis, once every seven years. The Beraisa mentions that the dye of the Chilazon is very expensive due to the infrequent availability of the Chilazon.

8. The Gemara earlier in Shabbos (26a) and in Megilah (6a) limits the locale in which the Chilazon is found to the seashores of the tribe of Zevulun, "from the cliffs of Tzur (Rosh ha'Nikrah) to Haifa."

The Chilazon's ink: The final group of features relate to the ink that the Chilazon produces.

9. RABEINU TAM, cited by TOSFOS in Kesuvos (5b, DH Dam), proves that taking blood out of a creature is forbidden on Shabbos because of Netilas Neshamah (killing). Tosfos asks that according to Rabeinu Tam, why is one not Chayav for the Melachah of Netilas Neshamah when one takes blood out of the Chilazon? Tosfos answers that the blood of the Chilazon is gathered in a separate sack in the Chilazon and is ready to be extracted, and therefore its removal does not diminish the Chilazon's life in any way.

10. The Gemara here says that if the dye is extracted from the Chilazon while it is alive, it is of a better quality.

11. The Gemara in Bava Metzia (61b) says that the color of Techeles that comes from the Chilazon is indistinguishable from that of indigo ("Kala Ilan").

12. The Gemara in Menachos (43b) says that Techeles is steadfast. It does not fade with time nor wash out of the wool dyed with it.

(b) Now that we have reviewed the characteristics of the Chilazon that can be derived from the Gemara's statements about it, we shall analyze the various opinions of the identity of the Techeles and examine whether these opinions are consistent with the characteristics enumerated above.

1. Is it a Kosher fish?

TOSFOS here (75a, DH ha'Tzad and DH v'Lichayev) implies that the Chilazon is a type of fish that squirms around in the net after it is caught, making it difficult to extract its dye. This, Tosfos explains, is the difference between the Chilazon and the other fish of the sea with regard to the prohibition of Netilas Neshamah on Shabbos (#4 above). Since the Chilazon squirms about after it is removed from the water, one is not considered to have killed it, and one has not transgressed the Melachah of Netilas Neshamah at the moment that he takes it out of the water. Rather, it kills \*itself\* by wriggling about.

It seems that the view of Tosfos, that the Chilazon is a fish, is based on the Gemara here (#2 above) which implies that the Chilazon is a fish like any other, and it must be captured with nets. The RAMBAM (Hilchos Tzitzis 2:2) also writes that the Chilazon is a fish. They do not discuss, however, the exact identity of this fish, or whether it is a Kosher or non-Kosher fish. The view that the Chilazon is a fish also conforms with features #1 and #3 enumerated above. Although it seems to contradict feature #5 since it does not have a hard shell and the word "Potze'a" does not seem appropriate, Rashi here avoids this contradiction by explaining that the word "Potze'a" in this context is used differently. It does not mean to "smash," but rather to "squeeze out" the dye-blood from the fish.

RABEINU BACHYE (Shemos 25:3) discusses the three dyes used in the construction of the Mishkan -- Techeles, Argaman, and Tola'as Shani. The last of these three dyes is generally understood to mean "scarlet from a worm." Rabeinu Bachye asks how this is possible, since the Gemara in Shabbos (28b) says that only products that are permitted to be eaten were used in the Mishkan. Worms and their secretions are not Kosher! He therefore explains that the scarlet dye of the Tola'as Shani was not actually taken from worms, but from some sort of berry in which the worms tend to live. According to the approach of Rabeinu Bachye, we may conclude that the Chilazon, which is a sea creature, must be a normal fish with fins and scales, for this type of fish is the only Kosher sea creature.

The approach of Rabeinu Bachye, however, is problematic. It seems clear from the Yerushalmi (Kil'ayim 9:1) that the scarlet dye of Tola'as Shani indeed was extracted from the Kermococcus vermilis, an insect that breeds on a certain species of oak), and not from a berry. This has also been verified from other historical and scientific sources.

Regarding how a non-Kosher creature could be used in the manufacture of an item for use in the Mishkan, we must say that it was only the actual materials used in the Mishkan which were subject to this rule, and not the dyes that were used to color them. The dyes, which are not tangible objects in the finished product, were not included in this prohibition. Accordingly, we are not bound to assume that the

Chilazon was a Kosher creature. (See NODA B'YEHUDAH, Mahadura Tinyana OC 3.)

## 2. Is it a squid?

As we mentioned above, Tosfos maintains that the Chilazon is a fish. While Rabeinu Bachye asserts that it had to be a Kosher fish in order to be used in the Mishkan, other authorities assert that it did not need to be a Kosher fish; a dye obtained from a non-Kosher fish was also permitted to be used in the Mishkan.

In the late nineteenth century, Ludwig Lewysohn proposed in his book, "Talmudic Zoology" ("Die Zoologie des Talmuds," Frankfurt 1858, pp. 284-5), that the Chilazon is a type of squid, known as the cuttlefish. Lewysohn based his conclusion on an inference from a statement of the RAMBAM (Hilchos Tzitzis 2:2). Shortly afterwards (circa 1888), the brilliant and dynamic Rebbe of Radzin, Rav Gershon Henoch Leiner, came to the same conclusion. He carried the conclusion one step further by actually developing a process whereby the sepia (inky secretion) of the cuttlefish, which normally produces a dark brown dye, was transformed into a blue dye. The Radziner Rebbe authored three large volumes intended to prove that he had indeed re-discovered the lost Techeles (SEFUNEI TEMUNEI CHOL, PESIL TEHELES, and EIN TEHELES), and he set up a factory where the dye was produced.

(It is interesting to note that the method used by the Radziner Rebbe to produce Techeles consisted of boiling the sepia together with iron filings and potash at extremely high temperatures to produce the pigment ferric ferrocyanide. Dye chemists are quick to point out, however, that this process does not make any unique use of the squid's inky secretion. In fact, the sepia itself disintegrates and never makes it to the final product, leaving behind only its nitrogen atoms. Any compound that contains nitrogen will produce the same result when boiled with iron. In fact, a similar process is used by organic chemistry students to test for nitrogen in compounds.)

The approach of the Radziner conforms with #2, #3, and #4, since he maintains that the Chilazon was a fish, as we pointed out earlier (b:1). (It conforms with #5 as well, because squids indeed have a hard, shell-like "bone" under their skin.) It also conforms with #9, because the ink (sepia) of the squid is contained in a separate sack. The ink is the blood that the Gemara mentions. It might conform with characteristic #10 as well. As for characteristic #6, perhaps the body can be described as "looking like the sea" since the cuttlefish is somewhat transparent, and changes color according to its environment.

However, there are a number of difficulties with the Radziner Rebbe's opinion. First, Techeles is described as absolutely indelible (#12 above), but the Radziner's Techeles can fade (a process called "bleeding") when scrubbed with common detergents. Second, the blue color that he produced was not the blue of the sea, the shade of indigo (#11), but rather a more metallic blue. Also, the squid he used is of a species that is relatively abundant and equally common in all oceans, and thus it does not correspond to the statements #7 and #8 about the rarity and limited habitat of the Chilazon.

## 3. Is it a snail?

RASHI in Sanhedrin (91a) writes that the Chilazon is a type of slug ("Tola'as"), which allows for the possibility of identifying it as a mollusk. Similarly, the RA'AVAD (Toras Kohanim Metzora 1:14) calls the Chilazon a type of worm or slug that lives in the sea.

This is also implied by the statement of the Beraisa in Menachos (#1 above). The Beraisa says that the body of the Chilazon looks "similar" to that of a fish, implying that the Chilazon itself is not a fish. The Beraisa also says that its "creature" is like that of a fish, which might refer to the slug inside of the shell, while "its body is like the sea" may refer to the color of the shell itself.

The YAD RAMAH in Sanhedrin (91a) implies that the word "Chilazon" refers to snails in general, and the Chilazon of the Techeles is a particular type of snail (see also ARUCH). This seems to be the way the RA'AVAD (at the end of his introduction to Sefer Yetzirah) uses the word Chilazon as well. Indeed, the word "Chilazon" is used in numerous places as a general term meaning a snail or a snail-like object. The Chilazon mentioned in Shir ha'Shirim Rabah (4:11) is clearly a creature that lives inside a shell. The Mishnah in Bechoros (6:2) and in Kelim (12:1) calls an object with a spiral or twisted snail-shell appearance a "Chilazon." In Sanhedrin (91a) we are told that Chilazons appear on the surface of the earth after a rain. It seems clear from all of these sources that the word "Chilazon" is used in the context of "snail," and it is therefore logical to assume that the Chilazon that produces Techeles is also a particular type of snail.

This is a very strong objection to the Radziner's identification of the Chilazon as a squid, as a squid does not live inside a shell. (The Radziner Rebbe's attempts to resolve this difficulty are recorded in "Ha'Techeles," p. 174.)

Identifying the Chilazon as a snail is consistent with characteristics #5 and #9. It also provides a simple explanation for why one is not obligated for Netilas Neshamah when he removes a Chilazon from the water. Removing a snail from

water does not kill it, even if its shell dries out, since it can remain moist within the shell for a long period of time.

The problems with the snail hypothesis are characteristics #2 and #3 (as we mentioned before, b:1). The snail does not seem to require a net to be captured (#2), and it is not difficult to catch, as it does not run away (#3).

One answer for the characteristic that nets are used to catch the Chilazon (#2) is that historically and until today, the Greeks have hunted for snails by lowering baited nets into the water, into which the snails crawl to eat the bait. The nets are then lifted with the snails inside of them. However, this answer is not entirely satisfactory, since strings would serve this purpose just as well. From the Gemara it seems that the knots of the nets were important for the capture of the Chilazon.

Concerning the characteristic of trapping (#3), the Yerushalmi indeed states that one who captures the Chilazon is \*not\* Chayav for trapping. This makes sense only according to those who explain that the Chilazon is a snail (which does not flee when one catches it). Tosfos here (DH ha'Tzad) indeed grapples with the Yerushalmi's ruling.

To explain why the Bavli \*does\* obligate a person for trapping the Chilazon (if it is a snail), it has been suggested that since the snail hides itself in the sand and is difficult to find, capturing it is indeed considered to be the Melachah of trapping, even though it does not flee when found.

Perhaps a more plausible approach to these two questions is that the Bavli and Yerushalmi disagree with regard to the identity of the Chilazon. The Yerushalmi, which noticeably avoids the Bavli's suggestion that the Chilazon is caught in a net (Yerushalmi Shabbos 7:2), maintains that it is a snail. Therefore, one is not Chayav for Tzad if he captures a Chilazon. The Amora'im of the Bavli understand that the Chilazon is a fish, which is why they suggest that it is caught in nets and that one is Chayav for transgressing the Melachah of Tzad when one captures it. (M. Kornfeld)

It is interesting to note that Rashi in Menachos (44a, DH v'Olah) says that the Chilazon comes up "from the land." This does not fit the description of an aquatic snail. Indeed, Rashi himself in many other places (Sanhedrin 91a, DH Chilazon; Megilah 6a, DH Al Yedei; Bava Metzria 61b, DH Kala; Chulin 89a, DH she'ha'Techeles) says that the Chilazon comes up from the ocean.

The TAHARAS HA'KODESH explains that Rashi does not contradict himself. Rashi in Megilah states that the Chilazon comes up "from the ocean to the mountains." This means that Rashi understands that it originates in the sea, and from there it finds its way to the land. The YA'AVETZ explains that Rashi in Sanhedrin means that the Chilazon comes from the "ocean floor", and thus when Rashi says "land," he means the land of the ocean. 4. Is it the Janthina snail?

Can we identify which of the many species of snails is the one that produces the Techeles dye?

The theory that the Chilazon is a snail was researched in depth by Rav Yitzchak Isaac ha'Levi Herzog zt'l, who laid the foundation for research into the identity of the Chilazon. The Chilazon was the topic of his doctoral thesis (at age 24), in which he combined his tremendous erudition in Torah with his exceptional scholarship in eight different disciplines and twelve languages. To this day, his thesis remains the most basic and authoritative work on the subject, from both a Talmudic and a scientific perspective. The Hebrew version of his thesis was reprinted in full in the book "Ha'Techeles" (by Rav Menachem Burstein, Jerusalem, 1988, pp. 352-437), an excellent work which summarizes all of the Techeles research done until that date. The longer, English version of Rav Herzog's thesis was printed in "The Royal Purple and the Biblical Blue" (Keter, 1987) along with other works on the subject.

Rav Herzog proposed that the snail from which Techeles was derived was the Janthina Pallida Harvey. It is found in the Mediterranean Sea, and has a beautiful violet-blue shell. When excited, it discharges a secretion of the same color. It is quite rare and lives in colonies that experience population explosions every four to seven years, when large numbers of them are washed ashore. This fits perfectly with characteristics #6 and #7, that the Chilazon looks like the sea and is rare.

In recent years, research has been done to determine whether a blue dye can be made from the Janthina's secretion. So far, the efforts have not met with much success. The secretion can produce a reddish-bluish color on a fabric, but within a matter of hours the color turns black. In addition, the dye washes right out of the fabric when brought into contact with water. The most advanced modern testing has not been able to even reduce the secretion in any chemical solution (the most basic requirement of any known dye). Instead of dissolving in liquid, the Janthina's ink forms a suspension. In this state, it cannot be induced to bind to a fabric. More research into the chemical makeup of the secretion is necessary.

There are other problems with identifying the Chilazon as the Janthina snail. First, like the cuttlefish, it is no more common along the shores of Zevulun than anywhere else in the Mediterranean (#8). Second, as Rav Herzog himself points out, no Janthina shells have ever been discovered in any archaeological site, nor is this snail mentioned anywhere in the Greek or Roman literature that discuss blue dye, indicating that it was not used in the ancient world.

5. Is it the Murex snail?

In the mid-1800's, archaeologists uncovered numerous ancient dye-producing factories along the Mediterranean coast, mostly in the north-eastern area, between Haifa and Lebanon, with large heaps of snail shells alongside them. This is consistent with the Gemara's statement (#8) that the only place in Eretz Yisrael where Techeles can be found is in the territory of Zevulun, which runs along the Mediterranean coast from Haifa northward. These shells have been identified as belonging to three distinct species of snails: *Purpura Haemastoma*, *Murex Brandaris*, and *Murex Trunculus*. It is now accepted that these snails were the source of Tyrian purple, the "Argaman" mentioned in the Torah.

Rav Herzog points out that it is clear from a number of Torah sources and historical sources that the Jews and the non-Jews extracted their blue dyes from the same creature ("HaTecheles," pp. 426-427; see also Shabbos 26a, and Rashi there, DH ul'Yogvim). Nevertheless, he rejects the suggestion that one or all of these species may be the true source of the Techeles for several reasons. First, the color of their shells is white, which contradicts the Gemara's description (#6 above) that the Chilazon's body is like the sea (a bluish hue). Furthermore, and more importantly, the dye extracted from these creatures is purple and not indigo (#11). The above-mentioned snails were clearly the source of Argaman, or "purpura" in Latin. Techeles, which is referred to in Latin by Josephus and Philo as "hyacinthos," may have been produced from another snail altogether -- perhaps the *Janthina* that he suggested (above, b:4).

Others (such as Alexander Dedekind in "Archeological Zoology," Vienna, 1898, p. 467) suggest that the blue dye of Techeles did come from the snails found near the ancient dye vats. Two of the species were used to produce Argaman, while the *Murex Trunculus* was used to produce Techeles. This distinction is based on the fact that not far from Sidon an ancient dyeing site was discovered, with two separate piles of shells near it. One huge pile contained a mix of shells of *Purpura Haemastoma* and *Murex Brandaris*, while the other contained only shells of *Murex Trunculus* ("HaTecheles," p. 421). Moreover, the *Murex Trunculus* produces a blue dye slightly more readily than the other two.

Although he personally favored his *Janthina* theory, Rav Herzog himself reluctantly admitted that, "The logical conclusion would certainly appear to be that the blue pigment produced by the Chilazon was obtained using the *Murex Trunculus* dye... it is highly unlikely that the Techeles Chilazon was not the *Murex Trunculus*" ("HaTecheles," p. 421).

Rav Herzog's main objection to this position was that the shells of *Murex Trunculus* are white and not similar to the sea (#6). Others explain that the Gemara which compares the Chilazon to the sea does not refer to the \*color\* of the snail, but to the wave-like contours on the snail's shell. Yet others explain that the Gemara's intention is to compare the snail's shell to the sea \*bed\*. The shell is covered by sea-fouling and perfectly matches the rocks to which it attaches itself. (However, neither of these explanations satisfies the version of the Beraisa that is quoted in Maseches Tzitzis, according to which the Chilazon is "similar to the sky." Another possibility is that when the Beraisa describes the "Guf" of the Chilazon, it is describing the ink which is used to produce its dye, and not its shell (-M. Kornfeld).)

Another objection Rav Herzog raised was that the secretion of the *Murex Trunculus* turns purple and not blue (#11). Rav Herzog himself raised the possibility that "there might have been some scheme known to the ancients for obtaining a blue dye out of this secretion" ("HaTecheles," p. 423). Recent research has shown that when the secretion is exposed to sunlight after being chemically reduced (a step in the dyeing process), the sunlight breaks down certain chemical bonds in the resulting liquid and it subsequently forms a blue dye. In fact, the resulting dye consists mostly of components bearing the exact same chemical composition as indigo.

One major difficulty remains. What is the once-in-seventy-years cycle of "coming up" mentioned by the Beraisa (#7)? Does the *Murex Trunculus* snail show any unusual prominence every seventy (or seven) years? So far, no such behavior has been observed in the *Murex*. Various explanations have been offered (for example, the Beraisa uses the number "seventy" merely to emphasize the infrequency of the appearance of the Chilazon, as the Mishnah in Makos (7a) uses that number to emphasize the infrequency of Beis Din's application of capital punishment), but no answer has yet been offered that is entirely satisfactory.

Today, there are two Techeles-producing factories. One, located in Bnei Brak, produces the Radziner Techeles, worn only by Radziner and Breslover Chasidim. The other, located in the Jericho area, produces Techeles from the *Murex Trunculus* (see TECHELES SECTION).

RAV CHAIM VITAL (in Sha'ar haKavanos, Tzitzis, Derush 4) writes that Techeles represents Hashem's presence as clearly felt in the world. This is why Techeles was widely accessible only during, and close to, the era when the Beis ha'Mikdash stood. At that time, Hashem's presence was manifest in the world for all to see. After the exile, and subsequent hardships, when Hashem's presence among His people has become less evident, Techeles has become "hidden" as well. The "return" of Techeles may be an indication that the manifestation of Hashem's

presence in this world, too, will soon return to its former state. (See also "HaTecheles," p. 186, note 21, and Likutei Tefilos 1:49). (M. Kornfeld) (See also Insights to Menachos 44:1. Regarding the practical, Halachic implications of wearing Techeles today, see Insights to Menachos 44:2.)

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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

**Sir Jonathan Sacks**

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

[From 2 years ago - 5766]

<http://www.chiefrabbi.org/tt-index.html>

Shelach

Whose idea was it to send the spies? According to this week's sedra, it was G-d.

The Lord said to Moses, "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders." So at the Lord's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. (Numbers 13: 1-3) According to Moses in Deuteronomy, it was the people:

Then all of you came to me and said, "Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to." The idea seemed good to me; so I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe. (Deut. 1: 22-23) Rashi reconciles the apparent contradiction. The people came to Moses with their request. Moses asked G-d what he should do. G-d gave him permission to send the spies. He did not command it; He merely did not oppose it. "Where a person wants to go, that is where he is led" (Makkot 10b) - so said the sages. Meaning: G-d does not stop people from a course of action on which they are intent, even though He knows that it may end in tragedy. Such is the nature of the freedom G-d has given us. It includes the freedom to make mistakes.

However, Maimonides (Guide for the Perplexed III: 32) offers an interpretation that gives a different perspective to the whole episode. He begins by noting the verse (Ex. 13: 17) with which the exodus begins:

When Pharaoh let the people go, G-d did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For G-d said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." So G-d led the people around by the desert road toward the Reed Sea. Maimonides comments: "Here G-d led the people about, away from the direct route he had originally intended, because He feared that they might encounter hardships too great for their present strength. So He took them by a different route in order to achieve His original object." He then adds the following:

It is a well known fact that traveling in the wilderness without physical comforts such as bathing produces courage, while the opposite produces faint-heartedness. Besides this, another generation rose during the wanderings that had not been accustomed to degradation and slavery. According to Maimonides, then, it was irrelevant who sent the spies. Nor was the verdict after the episode - that the people would be condemned to spend 40 years in the wilderness, and that it would only be their children who would enter the land - a punishment as such. It was an inevitable consequence of human nature.

It takes more than a few days or weeks to turn a population of slaves into a nation capable of handling the responsibilities of freedom. In the case of the Israelites it needed a generation born in liberty, hardened by the experience of the desert, untrammelled by habits of servitude. Freedom takes time, and there are no shortcuts. Often it takes a very long time indeed.

That dimension of time is fundamental to the Jewish view of politics and human progress. That is why, in the Torah, Moses repeatedly tells the adults to educate their children, to tell them the story of the past, to "remember". It is why the covenant itself is extended through time - handed

on from one generation to the next. It is why the story of the Israelites is told at such length in Tanakh: the time-span covered by the Hebrew Bible is a thousand years from the days of Moses to the last of the prophets. It is why G-d acts in and through history.

Unlike Christianity or Islam there is, in Judaism, no sudden transformation of the human condition, no one moment or single generation in which everything significant is fully disclosed. Why, asks Maimonides (Guide, III: 32), did G-d not simply give the Israelites in the desert the strength or self-confidence they needed to cross the Jordan and enter the land? His answer: because it would have meant saying goodbye to human freedom, choice and responsibility.

Even G-d Himself, implies Maimonides, has to work with the grain of human nature and its all-too-slow pace of change. Not because G-d cannot change people: of course He can. He created them; He could re-create them. The reason is that G-d chooses not to. He practices what the Safed Kabbalists called *tzimtzum*, self-limitation. He wants human beings to construct a society of freedom - and how could He do that if, in order to bring it about, He had to deprive them of the very freedom He wanted them to create. There are some things a parent may not do for a child if he or she wants the child to become an adult. There are some things even G-d must choose not to do for His people if He wants them to grow to moral and political maturity.

In one of my books I called this the chronological imagination, as opposed to the Greek logical imagination. Logic lacks the dimension of time. That is why philosophers tend to be either rigidly conservative (Plato did not want poets in his Republic; they threatened to disturb the social order) or profoundly revolutionary (Rousseau, Marx). The current social order is either right or wrong. If it is right, we should not change it. If it is wrong, we should overthrow it. The fact that change takes time, even many generations, is not an idea easy to square with philosophy (even those philosophers, like Hegel and Marx, who factored in time, did so mechanically, speaking about "historical inevitability" rather than the unpredictable exercise of freedom).

One of the odd facts about Western civilization in recent centuries is that the people who have been most eloquent about tradition - Edmund Burke, Michael Oakeshott, T.S. Eliot - have been deeply conservative, defenders of the status quo. Yet there is no reason why a tradition should be conservative. We can hand on to our children not only our past but also our unrealized ideals. We can want them to go beyond us; to travel further on the road to freedom than we were able to do. That, for example, is how the Seder service on Pesach begins: "This year, slaves, next year free; this year here, next year in Israel". A tradition can be evolutionary without being revolutionary.

That is the lesson of the spies. Despite the Divine anger, the people were not condemned to permanent exile. They simply had to face the fact that their children would achieve what they themselves were not ready for.

People still forget this. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were undertaken, at least in part, in the name of democracy and freedom. Yet that is the work not of a war, but of education, society-building, and the slow acceptance of responsibility. It takes generations. Sometimes it never happens at all. The people - like the Israelites, demoralized by the spies' report - lose heart and want to go back to the predictable past ("Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt"), not the unseen, hazardous, demanding future. That is why, historically, there have been more tyrannies than democracies.

The politics of liberty demands patience. It needs years of struggle without giving up hope. The late Emmanuel Levinas spoke about "difficult freedom" - and freedom always is difficult. The story of the spies tells us that the generation who left Egypt were not yet ready for it. That was their tragedy. But their children would be. That was their consolation.

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from "Shabbat Shalom: **Rabbi Shlomo Riskin's Parsha List**"  
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SHABBAT SHALOM:Parshat Shelach (Numbers 13:1-15:41) 18  
Sivan, 5768 - 21 June, 2008 EFRAT, Israel - "And G-d spoke to  
Moses saying 'Send men to scout the land of Canaan, which I am giving to  
the Israelite people...' " (Numbers 13:1-2)

In the process of becoming a nation, the Jewish people committed any number of sins, but one in particular, as recorded in this week's portion, Shlach, dwarfs all others. The events are as follows: G-d commands Moses to appoint men to explore the land they will be settling -- a reasonable request. And so Moses appoints 12 princes to survey the land. After 40 days, they return with their report. As it turns out, the report is phrased in a way which sours the spirit of the people, and instead of being excited about the prospects of the new land, they let out a great cry. As a result of this wail, the Midrash tells us that G-d decides that if they think they have something to cry about now, let them wait. And so this date, the 9th of Av, becomes fixed in the Jewish calendar, reserved for mourning major national tragedies such as the destruction of both Temples, and the exile of the Jews from Spain 500 years ago. To understand the nature of their sin, we have to look more closely at the events recorded in the portion of Shlach. The report's opening phrase evokes the splendor of the promised land. "Indeed it's a land of milk and honey," (Numbers 13:27), an expression that has virtually become synonymous with the land of Israel. Displaying the enormous fruits of the land, we can safely conclude from their opening words that the spies had no doubts about the land's fertility. One would be hard-pressed to find in their entire report something against the land itself. True, "...the people living in the land are aggressive, and the cities are large and well-fortified. We also saw the giants there..." (13:28) is what they say, but are these words against the land? If the sin of the people wasn't against the land, perhaps it was against G-d? But they never actually say that G-d is wrong, nor do they deny that this is the land promised to them by G-d. In fact, using the expression 'milk and honey' reaffirms G-d's promise to Moses at the Burning Bush: "I will bring you to a land of milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). If we cannot pin their rebellion against G-d or against the land, what are we left with?

A clue can be found if we take a look at the verse which speaks of the land consuming its inhabitants. We read, "They began to speak badly about the land that they had explored. They told the Israelites, 'The land that we crossed to explore is a land that consumes its inhabitants. All the men we saw there were huge. While we were there we saw Nephilim... We felt like tiny grasshoppers. That's all that we were in their eyes'" (Numbers 13:32-33).

But if the land consumes its inhabitants, how is it possible that the people are huge? There should be no one alive, let alone giants and sons of the Nephilim?! As Nachmanides points out, (13:32) a poor, weak land cannot produce people strong in stature. Implicit in Nachmanides' words is that the land is not for average people. And this is the heart of the problem.

Notice the sequence. 'There we saw the giants. We felt like grasshoppers,' followed by, 'That's all we were in their eyes' What this points to is a common phenomenon -- how we see ourselves determines how others end up seeing us. If you're a grasshopper in someone else's eyes, obviously he'll crush you without a second thought, and once you think of yourself as a grasshopper, the rest of the world seconds the motion. The image of a grasshopper is striking, capturing the essence of exile: a chirping, tiny creature at the mercy of all; one who is easily crushed. 'We were like grasshoppers' means that the scouts, although princes of tribes, still think like slaves in Egypt, seeing themselves as despised, dependent creatures. How could they have possibly believed in themselves? And if one doesn't believe in oneself, one usually assimilates, gives oneself over to a higher power, decides either to return to Egypt - which Dan and Aviram always wanted to do - or to remain paralyzed and in-active in the desert. In

accepting defeat rather than displaying defiance, the Jew is meekly and passively surrendering to fate as it 'hops' all over him. Now we see how in the scouts' sin lies the seed of the destruction of both Temples. Tragedy erupts not so much when others take a sudden dislike to us, but when we dislike ourselves and become paralyzed and passive as a result. The sin of the scouts is not in the terrible report they bring, but in their vision of themselves, a perception which becomes contagious, and which ends up as a self-fulfilling prophecy of doom. As James Baldwin said so aptly, he could forgive America for enslaving the Blacks, but he could never forgive America for making the blacks feel that they were worthless, that they deserved to be slaves.

And that's precisely what Egypt did to the Hebrews! In this century, we've taken giant steps toward rectifying this distorted vision, apparently more work needs to be done before the self-image of the grasshopper is gone. Then, even if we live 'in a land that consumes' its inhabitants, it only acts as a curse for those who live passive grasshopper lives. But for the ex-grasshoppers, ready to take responsibility for the road to redemption, this land can really be a blessing. Shabbat Shalom! Enjoying Rabbi Riskin's weekly e-mails?

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RABBI ELI BARUCH SHULMAN

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Shlach 5761

After מרגלים, Jews are given 2 mitzvos - Nesachim and Chalah.

Chazal say this was by way of reassurance that they would eventually reach ארץ ישראל. But why these particular מצוות?

As far as נסכים: Associated with Ein Omrim Shirah Elah Al Hayayin .

Promise of joy; even they now they are נזופים למקום, in a state of נידוי. Eventually their relationship with הקב"ה will again be characterized by joy and song.

What about חלה?

What was motive of מרגלים? One answer, suggested by R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the בעל התניא: Wanted to stay in dessert, under ענני הכבוד in spiritual Utopia, eating Mon and Mei Be'er, Simlasam Lo Balsah, etc. no need to occupy themselves with physical needs. (מרגלים were leaders of that generation, apparently men suited to that utopian milieu).

But - purpose of Torah not for Utopia, but to be learned and observed in this world, and to infuse it with רוחניות, make it a place fit for השראת השכינה.

חלה - unlike other מצוות התלויות בארץ which did not go into effect until 14 years after the Jews entered ישראל, when it acquired the ארץ ישראל as recognized by halachah - went into effect as soon as they entered ארץ ישראל. Also - שיעור of dough required for חלה is identical to the amount of מן that fell to each Jew in the dessert - עומר חלה. Apparently, חלה expressed our gratitude that we no longer need מן, because we can take the לחם הארץ לחם, the עבור מן, and transform it into לחם מן השמים, back into מן.

So חלה teaches the lesson that the מרגלים failed to learn; and it represents the reassurance that the people, or at least their children, would learn that lesson.

No one of us lives in utopia. Everyone has hardships and difficulties. It is always tempting to say: If I had more - time, money, peace of mind - I would learn more, involve myself more in Yiddishkeit. But Torah is meant to be learned and lived in just those difficult situations, and to transform our lives thereby into something meaningful, and if we do that then our lives will be infused with joy and song.