

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON SHLACH - 5758

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Ravfrand@torah.org "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Sh'lach

Seeing It 'My Way' In this week's parsha we learn about the famous incident of the spies, who were sent to give a report of Eretz Yisroel and came back with a very negative report. They caused the entire nation to sin, by despairing of ever entering the Land. As atonement, the Jewish people had to spend 40 years in the desert. This was a seminal event, an event that changed Jewish history. One of the ways in which the spies described Israel was "a land that devours its inhabitants" [Bamidbar 13:32]. The Talmud [Sotah 35a] tells us that this refers to the fact that as the spies passed through the land, going from place to place and from city to city, they saw huge funeral processions wherever they went. Having seen death everywhere, they came back with the conclusion, that this must be a land that devours its inhabitants. The Steipler Rav, zt"l, in his work *Birchas Peretz* offers a beautiful insight: This incident illustrates a time-honored truth -- a person sees what he wants to see, he hears what he wants to hear, and he believes what he wants to believe. One person can see a certain incident and look at it objectively and come out with one conclusion and another person can see the same incident and come to a totally different conclusion. Our Sages tell us that the spies walked into the Land of Israel with a jaundiced eye. They had their own agenda. The Ba'al HaTurim states they were worried that when they came into Israel there would be a new order and they would lose their positions of prominence. Therefore they went in with a negative approach to the whole idea of entering Eretz Yisroel. They should have looked at the funerals and said, "Look at this amazing Divine Providence. Look at how G-d is protecting us! Here we are spies and spies are always worried about being detected, so G-d caused the people to be distracted and preoccupied with the funerals so that we won't be noticed. What Hashgocha protis!" They should have seen this and recognized that if G-d offers such protection to the expeditionary force, He would certainly offer Divine protection to the entire Jewish nation. That's how they should have seen it objectively, if they didn't have their own agenda. But because of their agenda they looked at these events and said "Amazing- everyone is dying -- it must be a country that devours its inhabitants." The Steipler observes that their argument was counter-intuitive. If in fact Eretz Yisroel was a country where people were constantly dying and funerals were commonplace, then we would not expect to see large funeral processions. If people would go to a half-dozen funerals a day, they would never get anything else done. People would attend funerals because they were relatively rare events; otherwise just the family members would bury their own dead. The problem is that people see what they want to see. If one comes in with rose colored glasses then everything looks rosy, but if one comes in with a negative attitude, he will only see the problems.

We once mentioned an unbelievable insight regarding this concept from Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz. The Talmud [Gittin 45a] tells us that Rav Ilish was captured by Gentiles. He was sitting in jail and was contemplating whether or not to try to escape. A bird came and said to him "Ilish -- flee; Ilish -- flee". Rav Ilish asked his cell-mate what the bird was saying. The cell-mate told him that the bird was telling him to escape. Rav Ilish reasoned that the bird was a raven, and could not be trusted. He discounted the bird's message. Then another type of bird came along and said "Ilish -- flee; Ilish -- flee". Rav Ilish again asked his cell-mate what the bird was saying. The cell-mate again told him that the bird was telling him to run away. Rav Ilish said that this bird was not a liar and therefore he decided to run away. Rav Akiva Eiger, in the *Gilyon HaShas*, cites the *Seder Olam*, which records that Rav Ilish was an expert in understanding the conversation of birds. However, it seems from our incident in the Talmud that Rav Ilish did not understand the conversation of birds -- since he consulted with his cellmate

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regarding what the birds were saying. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that Rav Ilish did understand the conversation of birds, and he knew they were telling him to flee, but since that is what he wanted to hear -- he did not trust himself. Since he knew that a person hears what he wants to hear and knew that he wanted to flee, he didn't want to rely on his own hearing to interpret the birds' message. The spies came into the Land and said, "the cup is half empty" because they came in jaundiced and negative. They took an innocuous event -- indeed they took a positive event that should have showed them *Hashgocha protis* [Divine supervision] -- and they turned it around and saw only bad. Such is the power of the human being and his partiality to his own agenda.

Once Doing It Already -- Do It Right! As we mentioned in the halacha portion of this lesson [which is not included in the e-mail version, but is available on audiocassette], the mitzvah of Tzitzis is equal to that of the entire Torah. It is designed to keep us in line and to remind us of G-d. It is a fundamental mitzvah. But there is an anomaly in this commandment which requires further analysis. Namely, if this command is so important, why is it optional? [The thrust of the halachic portion of the shiur was that the mitzvah of wearing a garment with Tzitzis is optional - the only absolute obligation is that if one wears a four-cornered garment, he must place Tzitzis on that garment. Nevertheless, since it is such a significant Mitzvah, Jews throughout the ages have always chosen to wear a four-cornered garment in order to fulfill this Mitzvah.] Shabbos is a fundamental mitzvah. Is it optional? Of course not! Pesach is a fundamental mitzvah. Is it optional? Of course not! Milah [Circumcision] is a fundamental mitzvah. Is it optional? Of course not! Commandments that are fundamental are not optional. Here we have a quirk. We have a basic, fundamental, mitzvah that is optional. What do we have here? I once heard from Rav Nochum Lansky, shlit"a, a beautiful insight. It is no coincidence that the mitzvah of Tzitzis is found in the parsha of the spies. If we look at these two chapters we see a lot of similarities... "And you will see the Land, what is her nature" [13:18] "And you will see it (the blue thread of Tzitzis)" [15:39] "They went to spy (lasur) the Land" [13:21] "And you shall not go astray (sasuru) after your hearts and eyes" [15:39]. How many times do we have the root 'lasur' in the Torah -- and here in this parsha we have it twice. Why? Our Sages tell us that the sending forth of spies was optional. "Shlach LECHA" (_You_ send forth -- meaning at your own discretion). What happened? They took something that was optional and turned it into an unmitigated disaster. In the portion of the spies, G-d gives us a mitzvah that should serve as atonement. He gives us an optional mitzvah. It is however, more than just atonement -- it is an education. This mitzvah comes to teach us that there are scenarios in life that are optional; but even if things are optional, there is a way to do it right and a way to do it wrong. One can take the sending of spies which was optional, and turn it into a disaster. G-d says I'm am going to give you an optional mitzvah, and I will show you how to take this optional mitzvah and to do it correctly and turn it into a beautiful thing rather than a disaster. That is why, even though this mitzvah is so basic and so fundamental and has so much meaning, G-d wanted to leave it on the optional level so that this would be both an atonement and a lesson. The lesson is that even when things in life are sometimes only in the sphere of the optional -- still there is the right way to go about them and the wrong way. Tzitzis may be optional, but there are 11 or 12 chapters in *Shulchan Aruch* telling us the intricacies of the laws of Tzitzis -- the right way to do it and the wrong way. This is a lesson for life. It always must be done the right way, whether we are obligated to do it in the first place or not.

Sources and Personalities Steipler Rav -- Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kaniefsky (1899-1985); Bnei Brak Ba'al HaTurim -- Rav Yaakov ben Asher (1268-1340); Torah commentary. Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz -- (1902-1978) Mir Rosh Yeshiva, Jerusalem. Rav Akiva Eiger -- (1761-1837); Rabbi of Posen; wrote comments on Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch*; father-in-law of Chassam Sofer. *Seder Olam* -- Ancient chronological work quoted by Talmud, attributed to the Tanna Rav Yosei ben Chalafta. Rabbi Nachum Lansky -- Magid Shiur, Ner Israel, Baltimore, MD Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@clark.net Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 for further information. RavFrand, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway [learn@torah.org](http://www.torah.org) 6810 Park Heights Ave. <http://www.torah.org> Baltimore, MD 21215 (410) 358-9800 FAX: 358-9801

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An Open Book Test "Send forth men, if you please, and let them spy out the land of Canaan." (13:2) A true story: Young Man to Rabbi: "Rabbi. I don't need organized religion. I know I have a special relationship with G-d.

"A couple of years ago, I was riding my motorbike along a twisting mountain road in Colorado. It was a beautiful day. Suddenly I turned a steep bend and right in front of me was this huge Mack truck. He slammed on his brakes and so did I. I and the bike fell flat and slid all over the road, but I was going too fast. I slid and slid. There was a sheer drop from the edge of the road of about 500 feet. I saw the edge getting closer and closer. I couldn't stop! I went over the edge with the bike. It fell away beneath me. Suddenly, in front of me was this branch. I grabbed it and it held my weight. I managed to swing my way back to the side of the cliff and get back to the road. It was a miracle. I don't need to keep the Torah. I know G-d is with me. Who else put the branch there for me?" Said the Rabbi to the young man: "Maybe you should ask yourself Who put the Mack truck there in the first place?" At the beginning of this week's Parsha, Rashi asks, "why does the incident of the spies directly follow Miriam speaking slander about Moshe?" But this seems to be a strange question. The reason that these events are juxtaposed is because they follow one another chronologically. That's the way things happened. Why shouldn't they be written one after the other? At some time in our lives, we have all taken an examination or a test of some kind. The essence of the test is that we don't know what the questions will be. If we knew, it wouldn't be a test. Not so is our relationship with the Creator. Hashem never gives us a test without first giving us the answers. The Jewish People had wanted to send spies into the Land of Israel for a long time prior to Hashem giving permission. However, Hashem knew that there would be a temptation to speak slander about the Land, and thus He waited until after Miriam had been punished for speaking slander so that the spies should clearly know that slander was prohibited. In other words, it wasn't so much that the incident of the spies followed Miriam speaking slander, rather that Miriam speaking slander provided the object lesson which facilitated the sending of the spies.

Hashem never gives us a test without first giving us the answers. Badmouth "Send forth men, if you please..." (13:2) One of the less felicitous expressions to enter the English language in the last thirty or so years is the verb "to badmouth" -- to speak ill of someone. Consciously or not, however, the pedigree of such an idea goes back a couple of thousand years. In this week's Parsha, the Torah describes the mission of the spies to scout out the Land of Israel. We learn that the spies erred terribly by slandering the Land. But what's wrong with slandering land -- trees and stones? The prohibition against denigrating a human being is understandable, because we can damage a person with slander and gossip. But a land? Is a land sensitive to slurs? And yet the spies are faulted for their evil report on the Land of Israel. The Torah prohibits us from doing evil not just for the effect that it has on others, but because of the effect it has on ourselves. Words cannot harm sticks and stones. It's ourselves we damage when we speak slander. The physical always mirrors the spiritual. The Torah calls slander lashon hara -- evil tongue -- meaning that the tongue itself has been made evil. It's not just that evil has been created in the world; not just that we have let loose a poison arrow that can never be retrieved. Our very body has been corrupted. We have made our tongue "evil;" our mouth "bad."

Sources: An Open Book Test - Gur Aryeh heard from Rabbi Moshe Zauderer, and a story heard from Rabbi Moshe Averick Badmouth - Rabbi A. Haver Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon (C) 1998 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

Yhe-parsha@virtual.co.il] Yeshivat har etzion Israel koschitzky virtual beit midrash (vbm) parashat hashavua Dedicated in memory of Shoshana Lunzer (Bayla Raizel bas HaRav Binyomin a_h) on the occasion of her first yearzeit 28 Sivan. Ddicated by Tikvah, Aryeh and Solomon Wiener, in honor of the birth of their daughter and sister, Lila.

PARASHAT SHELACH by Rav Yaakov Medan The Mission of the Spies

A. The Problem The sin of the spies is recorded in the Torah in Sefer Bamidbar and is repeated in Sefer Devarim, which records Moshe's final messages to the nation, recited on the plains of Moav just prior to their entry into the Promised Land (chapter 1). It is also mentioned in other places in Tanakh, sometimes explicitly and at length, sometimes only briefly and indirectly. A close examination of the sources associated with this sin gives rise to a number of questions. Some pertain to the seeming contradictions, while others concern the actual content of the story, especially the nature of the sin itself. We will deal with the following questions: 1. Who initiated the spy mission? Was this mission originally a Divine command that went wrong, or was the idea objectionable from the very beginning? From the wording in Parashat Shelach it would seem that the spies were sent by God's command (13:1), but from Sefer Devarim it would appear that it was the nation which initiated the project (1:22), and reading between the lines of Moshe's rebuke, it would seem that he did not consider it a positive initiative. 2. What was the nature of the mission and what were its aims? Were the men sent as "tourists" ("latur"), to witness first-hand the good of the land and its bounty, the strength of its inhabitants and its cities - as is suggested by the language of Sefer Bamidbar - or were they sent as military spies in order to discover the defensive weaknesses and the most convenient areas for conquest - as the pesukim in Sefer Devarim would seem to indicate? And if they were indeed sent in order to witness the quality of the land, why was this important now, before they entered the land? 3. Were the spies sent only to the Negev and to the mountainous area adjacent to it (the Judean mountains in general and Har Chevron in particular), as described in Devarim 1, Bamidbar 32 and even Bamidbar 13:22, or were they sent to tour the entire length and breadth of the country "from the wilderness of Tzin to Rechov Levo Chama", as stipulated in Bamidbar 13:21, and as would seem to be indicated by the length of their stay _ 40 days in all? 4. Was Moshe guilty of sin in this story? Was he punished for it? In Sefer Bamidbar there is no hint of any sin or punishment for Moshe. The only sin for which he is punished is that of Mei Meriva (the striking of the rock _ Bamidbar 20:12, 27:14, Devarim 32:51). But from Devarim 1 it appears that he was in fact punished in the wake of the sin of the spies (ibid. 37). Let us first turn our attention to the contradictions between the different accounts and within the story itself. I would submit that the great number of contradictions precludes our dealing with them in a piecemeal manner. It seems that the spy episode in fact comprised two distinct missions, one of which was a Divinely-ordained sacred venture, while the other was a practical mission, which resulted from Moshe's bending to the will of the people. The crux of this article will deal with the relationship between these two.

B. "By God's Word" In what sense was there a sacred mission? The verses in Bamidbar 13 do not hint at any human initiative. The entire mission is commanded by God: "And God spoke to Moshe saying: Send for you men and they shall tour the land of Canaan which I give to the children of Israel. And Moshe sent them from the wilderness of Paran ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD." (13:1-3) The purpose of this mission may be derived by comparing it to two other parshiot. One is the appointment of the princes for the purposes of the division of the land (Bamidbar 34:16-29). The style of this parasha is similar to that of the spies: In both cases princes are appointed for the tribes, and Calev ben Yefuneh, prince of Yehuda, is common to both lists. In Bamidbar 34, the function of the princes is clear - to divide the land, each prince for his tribe - and there is reason to believe that their function in our parasha is a similar one. The second comparable parasha is that of the dispatch of tribal representatives by Yehoshua from Shilo to their destined inheritances: "And Yehoshua said to the children of Israel: How long will you tarry in going to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you? Appoint from among you three men for each tribe, and I will send them and they will go up and traverse the land and mark it out according to their inheritance, and they shall come back to me. You shall therefore mark out the land in seven parts and bring it to me here, that I may cast

lots for you here before the Lord our God_ And the men went and passed through the land, and wrote it down by cities into seven parts in a book, and they brought it to Yehoshua to the camp at Shilo." (Yehoshua 18:3-9) In both cases, in Yehoshua and in our parasha, we are dealing with preparations for inheritance of the land, and in both cases tribal representatives are sent to tour the land or to traverse it. My assumption is that tribal princes have to go and tour the land in order to designate it for their respective tribes. According to Bamidbar 26:52-56, it would appear that the land should be divided by lottery. But according to the description in Sefer Yehoshua it seems that the fundamental division was done by the tribal representatives who toured the land, and the function of the lottery was simply to confirm Divine agreement to this division. Based on the similarity to the parasha in Yehoshua, we may conclude that Moshe's spies went with the intention of marking out - by their very footsteps - the future borders, just like Avraham who commenced his acquisition of the land by fulfilling the command to "get up and walk the length and breadth of the land, for to you shall I give it" (Bereishit 13:17). For this reason, the spies had to inspect the rivers and the fertility of the land and its bounty ("Is it a fat or a lean land, is there a tree in it or is there none" - Bamidbar 13:20), the cities ("Are they in camps or in fortresses" - ibid. 19); the climate and the water ("And the nation that dwells in it; whether it is strong or weak" - ibid. 18; "there are countries which breed mighty people and other countries which breed weak ones" - Rashi, ibid.) For this reason the spies had to TOUR the country, rather than spy on it. They had to tour the entire length of the country, "from the wilderness of Tzin to Rechov Levo Chamat" (13:21), and for this they would indeed require forty days (ibid. 25). This mission, with the aim of granting the tribes of Israel their inheritance in the land, was a completely sacred mission and entirely in fulfillment of God's command.

C. "And You All Drew Close to Me" In contrast with this holy mission, there was also a practical, mundane one. Upon hearing the Divine command to send the princes of the tribes to the land, the nation's awe at this prospect was accompanied by a mundane, simple, human fear of the impending war. It seems only natural that a nation would fear a prospective war, in unfamiliar territory, against mighty opponents whose reputation precedes them (see Devarim 9:1-2). This reaction itself would not merit a severe punishment. But I would suggest that it was the MIXTURE of mundane fears and human motives within the Divine awe and elevated spirituality at the prospect of inheriting the God-given land that was their downfall. The acquisition of God's inheritance was one of the most elevated experiences in the nation's history, a moment requiring the nation to rise above petty, individual, and even national considerations, a moment which called for sacrifice of everything for this Divine gift and God-given opportunity. The source of their sin lay in the small-mindedness which gave rise to their fear. The fear of the war led the nation to send SPIES to seek the easiest route for conquest: "And you all drew close to me and you said, 'Let us send men before us and they shall seek out the land for us and will bring us back word of the route by which we shall reach it, and of the cities to which we shall go.'" (Devarim 1:22) For this mission the nation did not demand that TWELVE representatives be sent, nor that they be princes - simply "men." This mission had nothing to do with division of the tribal inheritances and the holiness of the land; here the aim was altogether utilitarian - to facilitate the conquest. This was an instance in which "anyone who adds, in fact detracts." Their human fear, even if not deserving of severe punishment, was surely not commendable.

D. "You, Too, Shall Not Come There" In examining Moshe's responsibility we should bear in mind King David's exclamation: "Who shall attempt to harm God's anointed one and be blameless?" (Shmuel I 26:9). What follows is something of a criticism of Moshe Rabbeinu, although it is clear that his motives were entirely pure. The Abarbanel already suggests a similar idea in his commentary on Sefer Devarim. A superficial reading of the parasha of the spies in Sefer Devarim would lead us to think that Moshe was denied entry to Eretz Yisrael in punishment for the sin of the spies. The verse "Against me, too, God's anger burned because of

you, and He said: You, too, shall not come there" (1:37), appears in the context of the punishment for the sin of the spies, and is followed by the sin of the "ma'apilim" (which took place immediately after the incident of the spies). Abarbanel explains that the principle sins of Moshe and Aharon, for which they were punished by not entering the land, were connected with the two principle sins of the nation in the desert. Aharon was punished for the golden calf, and Moshe for the spies. My explanation for Moshe's mistake is a little different from that of the Abarbanel, but is nevertheless based on the same fundamental approach. Had the Jews entered Eretz Yisrael now, they would presumably have entered from the South, through the Negev, with the first fortified city being Chevron. Military spies would investigate the path of conquest, just as Yehoshua's spies went first to Yericho. Moshe's spies entered through the mountains and came to Nachal Eshkol (Devarim 1:24, and Bamidbar 32:9) in the Chevron area: "And they came up in the Negev and reached Chevron" (Bamidbar 13:22). Indeed, their description of the land centers on Chevron. They describe the fortifications - "And Chevron was built seven years before Tzo'an in Egypt" (ibid.) and the inhabitants - the "nefilim", children of Anak, are none other than Achiman, Sheshai and Talmai of Chevron - as well as the fruits of Nachal Eshkol, from Har Chevron. Thus we conclude that for the purposes of the MILITARY mission there was no need for twelve representatives, nor for them to be princes, nor for them to traverse the entire land. They needed only to see the Negev and Har Chevron, up to the city of Chevron, and this obviously did not require forty days, since their route - from Kadesh to Chevron and back to Kadesh Barnea - would have taken only a couple of days. The nation asked and demanded no more than this. Moshe's mistake lay in combining these two aims, so fundamentally different in nature and in their details, into one mission. He may have done this in order to avoid the complication of sending two separate missions to Canaan, or he may have had some other reason. In any event, this represented a dual mistake. On one hand, combining the two missions was a sin against the holy task of sending princes of Israel by God's command. Burdening the emissaries of this holy task with a mundane mission would appear to be making use of a holy vessel for mundane purposes (me'ila). Furthermore, the military mission was not merely a mundane task, but one arising from a weakness of spirit, from a missed opportunity for greatness. Even if the understandable fears of the nation led Moshe to agree to send spies to the land, since his refusal would only have led to panic, allowing this mission to "hitch a ride" on the back of the holy mission ordained by God detracted somewhat from the latter. Moreover, the combination of the two missions also did an injustice to the mundane mission, and one with disastrous consequences. A military spy mission has its own requirements and its own information specifications. A spying operation is doomed to failure if, rather than being planned with precision, it is tacked on as an afterthought to another dispatch. From Yehoshua's spies we are able to learn something of the dangers inherent in espionage, as well as the characteristics of those selected for such missions: a. Yehoshua sent two men and no more (Yehoshua 2:1). A group of twelve participants greatly increases the chance of being discovered by the enemy. A large group is always more visible and more clumsy when the situation calls for hiding, for escape or for evasion. Sufficient proof for this can be found in the story of Yosef's eleven brothers who are suspected of spying in Egypt. b. The midrash informs us that Yehoshua sent men with a proven military record: Pinchas, who had proved himself as a general in the war against Midyan, and Calev, whose qualities we come to discover in the story of the spies and later at the time of the conquest of Chevron and the subjugation of its giants (Yehoshua 14). What transpires in Yericho proves the wisdom of Yehoshua's choice: the spies are required to hide in an inn-keeper's house, they must climb down from the city wall using rope, and must hide in the mountains for three days. Would twelve respectable princes - some of whom may well have been old and physically weak - have been up to this task? We have full faith in the ability of the twelve princes to divide the land and its cities in a fair manner between the tribes and the households,

but will this ability make up for their lack of military know-how for their secondary, additional task? c. Yehoshua sent his men on a short-term mission _ from Shittin to Yericho and back, for just a few days. Nevertheless, the king of Yericho hears about it and manages to locate them (Yehoshua 2:2-3). Having spies in enemy territory for a full forty days would seem to be unjustifiably dangerous. It would appear that there was no great danger involved in sending the princes to TOUR the country. Canaan was a land full of fruit-merchants, land dealers and sundry tourists. The group of princes would not look out of place, and their examination of the nature of the land, its climate and its water would not arouse suspicion. Suspicion arises _ as in the case of the spies sent to Yericho _ when men come to examine city walls, access and escape routes, city water sources for siege conditions, etc. In trying to explain Moshe's motives for attaching the spy mission demanded by the nation onto God's mission, it would seem that Moshe was so convinced of the future success of the conquest of the land by God's word that he invested all his effort in the holy mission and did not pay sufficient attention to the spying, underestimating the dangers involved. He saw this as entirely secondary _ after all, its aim was simply to set the nation's minds at ease. The disastrous result was, apparently, difficult to predict. The emissaries set off for Canaan full of joy at the command with which they had been entrusted and certain of their route. It is doubtful whether they even took any professional espionage precautions. They came up from the Negev and reached Har Chevron. At Nachal Eshkol they picked a large bunch of grapes and some other fruits _ all with the innocent intention of showing the nation the bounty of the good land _ and hurried on to Chevron in order to proceed with the second part of their mission _ to examine the acceroutes to this city of the forefathers, which was to be the first city for their conquest and, later on, the first city over which the household of David would rule. It was on the way to Chevron that the turning point occurred. Even before entering the city they met the cold, suspicious eyes of Achiman, Sheshai and Talmai and their father, in the vineyards of Chevron, on the city outskirts. Their blood ran cold at the sight of the giants who looked at them like grasshoppers, and their joy at the mitzva evaporated. Only Calev entered Chevron. Only his feet trod its streets. His colleagues remained outside the city of the giants for fear of entering. From this point onwards the spies walked in fear and trepidation. Their secret had seemingly been discovered (the pasuk, "We seemed in our eyes as grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes _ 13:33 _ testifies to our lack of understanding of an exchange of glances with military significance; and they encountered an atmosphere of hostility and suspicion. From day to day the danger grew, and with it their fear, which turned to terror and then to panic. Their emergence from the safety of the pillars of cloud and of fire into a hostile country proved unbearable. The emissaries' wish to return to their families and not to be sold as slaves in the local markets, or to be crushed by the giants, gradually overshadowed their Divinely-ordained mission _ the division of the inheritances. And when they returned after forty days, the story engraved on their pale faces, in their hollow eyes, on their heavy hearts, was far more convincing than the testimony of the bunch of grapes, the pomegranate and the fig. The nation meanwhile had spent forty days in great anticipation. The division of the inheritances and the list of economic resources which each tribe would receive _ on one hand, and details of the military challenge ahead _ on the other, were the main topics of conversation. We may assume that after Moshe's declaration, "See, the Lord your God has given the land before you; arise and inherit as the Lord, God of your forefathers, has spoken. Do not be afraid and do not fear" (Devarim 1:21), the nation expected encouraging news. The depressed and terrorized appearance of the returning emissaries broke the tension. Fright spread like wildfire. For a moment, it appeared that Calev would be able to extinguish it, but the bitter reality soon became apparent. The mighty hero's words were too few and too late. The crying that night became a crying for all generations. Our attempt to analyze the events and draw conclusions is certainly based on the wisdom of hindsight. As mentioned above, the scope of the debacle was difficult

to predict. At the same time, the responsibility for what occurred still rests with the person who sent the spies _ Moshe Rabbeinu: "God became angry with me too on your account, and He said, 'You, too, shall not come there.'" (Devarim 1:37)
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"See the land - how is it? And the people that dwells in it - is it strong or weak?" (13:18) Rashi writes: Moshe gave them a sign - if the people dwell in open cities, they are strong, thus they rely on their strength for protection. If they live in walled cities, they are weak. R' Elya Meir Bloch z"l (20th century; rosh yeshiva of Telshe in Cleveland) comments: Some Jews believe in withdrawing from society and having no dealings with the outside world. Others do the opposite, attempting to be positive influences on their surroundings. To outward appearances, the first group, in its fortress of Torah and mitzvot, appears to be stronger, but maybe this is not so. Perhaps such withdrawal is a sign that a person is unsure of his spiritual strength. (Peninei Da'at) On the other hand: We are taught in Pirkei Avot (2:4), "Do not believe in yourself until the day you die." When Hillel made this statement, he had in mind the case of Yochanan Kohen Gadol who, after serving in the Bet Hamikdash for 80 years, suddenly became influenced by Greek culture and became a heretic. (Me'am Lo'ez)

But on the other hand: R' Levi Yitzchak of Bereditchev z"l (late 18th century) writes that the statement, "Do not believe in yourself until the day you die," is part of the statement that comes before it, i.e., "Do not separate yourself from the community." Chazal promise that a person who causes others to do mitzvot will be protected from spiritual harm. "Do not separate yourself from the community;" rather, attempt to teach them. Only in this way can you be spiritually secure. (Quoted in Vayaged Yaakov)

"Kalev silenced the people . . ." (13:30) R' Moshe Feinstein z"l observes: Hashem considered this to be a great act, as it is written (14:24), "But my servant Kalev, because a different spirit was with him and he followed Me wholeheartedly . . ." We can learn several lessons from this. First, we can learn that a person is obligated to speak or act when G-d's honor is at stake, even if he will not make an impact (just as Kalev is praised even though his rebuke was not heeded). Perhaps even one person will listen.

Second, we can learn that, just as we are obligated to do everything possible to lengthen another person's life even if we know that that person has only a short time to live, so, too, we are obligated to lengthen a person's spiritual life, even if it will be short-lived. This is what happened here, where the spies retorted to Kalev's words by repeating the same thing they had said before; apparently, Kalev swayed his listeners briefly - for which the Torah praises him - and the spies had to repeat their attack on the Land. (Darash Moshe)

"Kalev silenced the people towards Moshe, and said, 'We shall surely ascend . . .'" (13:30) What does it mean "towards Moshe"? R' Meir Simcha of Dvinsk z"l (20th century) explains as follows: In last week's parashah, two of the elders prophesied that Moshe would die and Yehoshua would lead Bnei Yisrael into the Land (see Rashi to 11:28). This left Bnei Yisrael dispirited, for they believed that all of the miracles that Hashem had performed were only in Moshe's merit. Kalev silenced the people "towards Moshe," i.e., regarding Moshe. He told them, "_We_ shall surely ascend, even without Moshe." This explains why it was Kalev and not Yehoshua who rebuked the people. Had Yehoshua spoken up, Bnei Yisrael might accuse him of having his own interests in mind. (Meshech Chochmah)

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Jerusalem Post Shabbat Shalom: Our Land By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(June 18) "And God spoke to Moses, saying: 'Send men, that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel.' " (Num.13:1-2) Why did the Jewish people wait almost 2,000 years before developing movements dedicated to the return to our homeland? And if, God forbid, we are forced into another confrontation with our Arab neighbors, will Israel be successful? A careful look at this week's portion of Shelah Lecha, containing the account of the scouts' evil report, may illuminate some of the eternal issues involved in the struggle for the Land of Israel. Indeed, perhaps no Torah reading is as contemporary as that which recounts the sin of the scouts. The entire story is problematic: given that the mission had such dire results, and that these results were predictable, why did God command such an expedition in the first place? And in practical terms, what possible purpose could such an "investigative committee" actually serve? And besides, why shake the foundation of a foregone conclusion? The Jews will eventually end up in the land promised in the contract signed and sealed at Sinai. And if it was God who initiated the sending of the scouts, why punish the Israelites with 40 years in the desert? Furthermore, even if their refusal to fight for the land - after hearing the negative report of the scouts - was tantamount to denying the miracle of the Exodus, and had the tragic potential of ending Jewish history virtually before it began, what about the possibility of repentance? What if the Jews had admitted that they sinned in not following God's command? Should such repentance not have been enough to alter the judgment? Should they not have received a second chance to go for the Promised Land? Indeed, in the following chapter such a change of heart occurs. The Torah records the nation's regret: "Lo, we are here, and we will go up to the place which God has promised, for we have sinned." (Num. 14:40) Conceivably this could have been the moment that God relents, seeing how the people have reached a genuine desire to repair their earlier weakness. But instead of atonement, Moses essentially tells his people to "forget the whole thing," as it were, declaring: "It is not going to succeed. Go not up because God is not among you..." And those who fight for the land despite their leaders' discouragement are called the ma'apilim and bring destruction upon themselves (14:43-45). Now, why isn't God among them? Doesn't repentance count for anything? Why does the Almighty not welcome and encourage this attempt to repair the damage? This question is posed by the Meshech Hochma (Rabbi Mayer Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk), and his answer helps put the sequence in perspective. First, we must note that in the Deuteronomy replay of the incident, it is clearly stated that it was the Israelites - and not the Almighty - who initiated the request for a spy mission: "I said to you... See, God has placed before you the land, go up and conquer it... do not be afraid and do not fear. And you all came near to me and you said: 'Let us send before us men, and let them spy out the land...' " (Deut. 1:20-22) Fascinatingly enough, the root of the Hebrew word vayahperu can mean "to spy out" but can also mean "to dig beneath." Would it not make sense to interpret the passage to mean that, despite the Divine guarantee, the Israelites suggested the sending of scouts because they really hoped to thwart the entire project of conquest? (Rashi understands the text thus, because he interprets the lecha of shelah lecha to mean "send - in accordance with your desire, because I did not command you." The Meshech Hochma then explains why the later repentance was not genuine. Apparently the Jews had been initially afraid to conquer the land. That was why they suggested the scouts in the first place. And then they were afraid NOT to attempt to conquer the land, because they thought God would strike them down next. They didn't repent because of some new independent discovery of the beauty of the land, or a sudden understanding that God's will was to be followed despite the danger. Theirs was not an independent epiphany, but a reaction to Divine retribution. From this perspective, it becomes clear that when Moses tells them they won't succeed, it's not because he doesn't accept their repentance. Rather, he's simply being a realist. Their "going up" won't succeed because conquering the land of Israel requires a lot more desire and will than the fear of being struck down by a

plague. Conquering the land cannot be done by default. In fact, what happened to the generation in the desert can be seen as the archetypal experience for all subsequent generations, because their "sin" can easily become our sin as well. We have to understand that unless our reason for coming to the land is based on true and profound commitment, our belief in our right to be here, then our chances of surviving in Israel are almost nil. If the final decision to make aliya is because of a "plague that broke out" back there, the chances are that the aliya will suffer. It was only when Jews realized that our only future lies in a Jewish state, which will serve not only as a haven but as a spiritual and cultural center, as a light for all peoples, that the State of Israel became a reality. If ours is the generation of the desert, then it only means that our commitment must be strong. If Israel is the land promised by God, then it must be a good land, and it will be a good land. Then we will inherit it, sacrifice for it, build it and - in so doing - build ourselves. Shabbat Shalom Rabbi Riskin, dean of the Ohr Torah Stone colleges and graduate programs, is chief rabbi of Efrat.

olas-shabbos@torah.org Olas-Shabbos Shelach: Land of Sparkling Stones Olas Shabbos
beShabbato: Rabbi Eliyahu Hoffmann

Why does the chapter of the spies follow immediately after the incident of Miriam's criticism of Moshe and her punishment? After having seen how Miriam had been stricken [with tzaraas (leprosy)] because of her slander, the spies should have appreciated the gravity of malicious gossip. But the wicked spies did not learn their lesson - and were not deterred from slandering the Land. [Rashi] With the advent of jet airplanes and overseas travel, we can, at a whim, hop on a plane and spend a few days in Eretz Yisrael [the Land of Israel]. It wasn't always so easy. In earlier times, travelling to Israel involved a long, arduous, and sometimes dangerous journey over land and water. In fact, to "visit" Israel at all was quite uncommon. Most people who undertook the journey did so to move there permanently. To go there for a week or ten days was unheard of. Today, we are blessed to have such ready accessibility to our Holy Land. Sometimes, though, this blessing can be a two-edged sword. The easier it becomes to visit Israel, the more commonplace and ho-hum it becomes. Travelling to the Holy Land, which had once been seen as a holy pilgrimage and a spiritually uplifting mission which could change one's life forever, is now weighed by potential vacationers against a trip to Florida or summer camp for the kids - "What should we do this year..." The more difficult something is, the more commitment and resolution it requires, the more meaningful it becomes. We have to be careful that in today's global, travel-happy society, we do not lose sight of our Holy Land and its significance.

Rabbi Chaim of Tzernowitz z"l, author of Be'er Mayim Chaim and other sefarim always dreamed of moving to Eretz Yisrael. A meshulach is an emissary who travels to the Diaspora to collect funds for the poor of Israel. In earlier times, every two years or so the Jewish community of Israel would select a representative to come and gather financial support. This meshulach would be from the elite scholars and pious individuals of the community - someone worthy of representing such a special cause. Once, a meshulach arrived in the town of Tzernowitz and began collecting funds. Eventually, he came to the house of R' Chaim, where he was asked in and offered a drink and some refreshments. From his demeanour, it was obvious that he was a very special and devout individual. R' Chaim sat him down and eagerly began questioning him about Israel: What was it like? How was it living there? Do you still feel its sanctity, even though you live there? "I will tell you this," said the meshulach, "the Land of Israel is so holy that even its stones sparkle with kedushah (sanctity)." R' Chaim responded that he probably meant this figuratively - a metaphor of the Land's holiness. "No, Reb Chaim," he insisted, "I mean this quite literally. As I said, the very stones of Israel sparkle with kedushah!" This was all R' Chaim needed to hear. Despite his wife's most ardent appeals, he decided that the time had come for them to finally move to Israel - to the land where "the very stones gleamed with kedushah!" After months of preparation and planning, they said their goodbyes and left Tzernowitz forever. After a long and difficult journey, their ship finally docked in the Holy Land. They disembarked. But R' Chaim, who should have been elated, seemed distressed. He had seen the stones. "I don't understand," he said to his wife, "these are just regular stones. They are no different from the stones back home in Tzernowitz! That meshulach lied to me!" R' Chaim was devastated. The meshulach had promised him that the stones of Israel - literally - sparkled with kedushah. How could he have lied so blatantly! As much as he tried, R' Chaim could not find room in his heart to forgive the man for having fooled him. Not too long afterwards, R' Chaim came across the meshulach. "Shalom Aleichem, R' Chaim," the man greeted him. "I see you finally decided to come and live with us in the Holy Land." "Aleichem Shalom," R' Chaim responded. Then he said, "Reb Yid, I'm having a hard time being mochel (forgiving) you. You lied to me. You promised me that the stones of Israel literally sparkle with kedushah. I do not contest that Israel is a very holy land, but I have yet to see even a single stone sparkle! How could you deceive me?" "R' Chaim," he answered calmly, "I told no lie. As I said then, so I will repeat to you now. The stones of Israel sparkle with kedushah. One must, however, be worthy of seeing this with his own eyes." Though not completely satisfied with this answer, R' Chaim did not pursue the argument any further. One day, after having lived in Israel for about half a year, R' Chaim saw it. He couldn't believe it. His eyes had been opened. The stones were sparkling with kedushah, just as the man had told him. R' Chaim was so moved by this that he was inspired to write a sefer, which he named Shaar Ha-tefilah (The Gate of Prayer), in gratitude of having been worthy to perceive the true kedushah of Eretz Yisrael. One who learns his sefarim can see how ahavas Eretz Yisrael (love of the Land of Israel) permeated his very being.

We are not used to the concept of lashon hara (malicious slander) applying to inanimate objects. We all know that it is forbidden to gossip and speak maliciously about other people, but also about other things? Evidently, the kedushah of the Land of Israel is such that even to speak critically about

it is immoral. Once, Rabbi Yechezkel Halberstam z"l, known to all as the Shinover Rav, visited Eretz Yisrael. While there, he travelled the length and breadth of the Land, and took in all its beauty. He saw the many pious Jews who lived there in sub-poverty conditions, and the great Torah scholars and Rebbes. He saw the wholesomeness and purity of the communities, and beheld their great commitment and mesirus nefesh (sacrifice) for Torah and mitzvos. Evidently, he also saw some things which weren't so pleasing. Perhaps he saw some families falling apart, unable to function under the difficult circumstances. Maybe he witnessed some conflict between different religious sects. Overall though, he was highly impressed. Before leaving the Holy Land, he went to visit the tzaddik Rabbi David of Lelov to ask for a blessing for his difficult journey back home. R' David presented him with a gift - a silver kiddush cup. "This cup," he said, "is to remind you not to be among those who spread slander about the Land" [mi-motzi'ei dibas ha-aretz ra'ah] (14:37). There is so much good to speak about Eretz Yisrael - make sure you don't focus on the negative." Nowadays, it is too easy to fall into the trap of being "among those who spread slander about the Land". We must remember and be aware of the great kedushah that Eretz Yisrael carries - and treat it with respect and awe. And may we all merit to behold the sparkle of its stones! Have a great Shabbos.

This week's publication has been sponsored by R. Pinchas Goldstein, in honour of the wedding of his nephew. Olas Shabbos, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Eliyahu Hoffmann and Project Genesis, Inc. The author is a Maggid Shiur (teacher) and Menahel (principal) in Mesivta Chassidei Bobov of Toronto. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21215 (410) 358-9800 FAX: 358-9801

Mj-ravtorah@shamash.org Siour HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Parshas Shelach
shelach.98 (Shiur date: 6/18/74) [Didn't make Fri. AM distribution]

The Mitzvos of Nesachim (libations) and Challah follow the Parshas Meraglim (story of the spies) in Parshas Shelach. Chazal asked what is the connection between these sections of the Parsha. Rashi and the Ramban point out that these two Parshios were intended to console the people and to reaffirm that HaShem will eventually bring them into the promised land despite the decree of wandering the desert for 40 years. That is why the Torah stresses the aspect of "when you shall enter the land". The Mitzvah of Nesachim and Challah did not apply to the Jews while they wandered the desert, they were obligated once they entered the land.

The Rav explained that there are 2 Korbanos HaTamid brought daily, in the morning and afternoon. The morning Korban Tamid expresses our thanks to HaShem for our continued physical existence. He returns us physically each morning and we are obligated to show our appreciation. There is a prohibition of eating before Tefilas Shacharis which is derived from the verse Lo Tochlu Al Hadam, and Chazal explain that one should not eat before praying for their existence. The Birchos Hashachar that we recite each morning express this thanks to HaShem for providing us with our basic needs.

With Tefilas Mincha the Halacha requires that we must interrupt our meal if we are eating until we have prayed. Though Mincha is established as the representation of the afternoon Tamid sacrifice, we stress the Mincha aspect and the associated Nesachim, as opposed to the basic Korban Tamid. While in the morning we are stressing thanks for the continued existence of man, in the afternoon we stress our thanks to HaShem for granting us luxuries of life beyond our basic needs, even though we often are not deserving of these luxuries. The afternoon Tamid, where we stress Minchas Haerev and associated Nesachim, as well as the general obligation to bring Nesachim with their Korbanos, expresses thanks to HaShem for allowing man success above and beyond the bare minimum required for existence.

The spies brought back a report of their impressions of the land. Why were they punished for this? The Ramban says that they added statements that the inhabitants were very strong and would be difficult to dislodge from the land and conquer the land. The Ramban adds that they later added a description of the land as one that consumes its inhabitants. The Rav explained that the spies were telling the people that the land makes it very difficult to eke out a living. However it is very difficult to achieve wealth beyond the basic needs in this land. A similar amount of work in another land will yield a much greater return. It is a land that consumes its inhabitants in that it requires an inordinate amount of work to achieve simple gains.

HaShem told them that when they finally do enter the land, the law of Nesachim will apply. This was meant to symbolize that there will be wealth beyond the basics if they follow the laws of HaShem. The Jew will have

much to be thankful for. They will be given a land where it will be possible to attain luxuries well beyond the basics. They will express thanks for their basic existence as symbolized by the Tamid Shel Shachar. They will also have the Minchas Haerev and its associated Nesachim, as well as the general Mitzvah of Nesachim with Korbanos that they bring, to symbolize that they will attain wealth beyond the basics.

Why introduce the Mitzvah of Challah at this point? We must examine Challah in relation to other agriculture oriented obligations. Terumos and Maasros are basically Chovas Karka, there is an obligation to give Terumah and Maaser once the crops attain Havaas Shlish, grow to a third of their average size. The obligation is driven by how nature manifests itself in terms of the growing cycle. The Terumah and Maaser is given from the raw materials, with minimal work on the part of man. Challah, on the other hand, becomes an obligation only after man puts significant effort onto turning the raw materials into a finished product.

The Midrash says that Turnus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva, if HaShem detests the uncircumcised, why did He not create man circumcised from birth? Rabbi Akiva explained by asking what is preferable: the grain or the baked cookie. When Turnus Rufus answered that the finished product was more desirable, Rabbi Akiva responded that we do not find cookies growing on trees. Rather HaShem provides man with all the basic raw materials to perfect the world. It is up to man to seize the opportunity and act in accordance with nature to perfect creation. The same is true with the need for circumcision.

The Mitzvah of Challah teaches us that prosperity is earned based on the effort that one puts in and the willingness to give away a portion of his work according to the Mitzvas HaShem. Eretz Yisrael can be made a prosperous place for the Jews if they are willing to follow this course. HaShem provides us with the raw materials, we are asked to be, Kivayachol, His partners in creation and to build on nature. Terumos and Maasros represent the basic raw materials that HaShem provides for us. Challah represents man's effort to take the raw materials and turn them into something special. Bnay Yisrael were told that they should not be afraid of Eretz Yisrael. If they are willing to make the effort, they will reap the rewards of the land.

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Eruvin 43 THE HALACHOS TAUGHT BY ELIYAHU HA'NAVI QUESTION: The Gemara says that someone taught seven Halachos in Sura at the beginning of Shabbos and taught them in Pumpadisa at the end of Shabbos. The Gemara first assumes that the person teaching those Halachos was Eliyahu ha'Navi (because only he is able to travel so fast in one day), and the Gemara concludes that it was Yosef the Shade (who does not observe Shabbos). It seems from the Gemara that the Halachos would be accepted even if it was known for sure that Eliyahu had taught them. We see this also in Berachos (3a), where Rabbi Yosi learned a number of Halachos from Eliyahu. We find also in a number of places that certain Halachic questions remain in doubt "until Eliyahu comes to resolve them for us" (see, for example, Sanhedrin 44a and Menachos 32a). How do we reconcile this with the teaching of RASHI (Shabbos 108a) who says that we cannot rely on Eliyahu for Halachic questions of Isur v'Heter, but only for questions of "fact or fiction?" In addition, the Gemara in Temurah (16a) teaches that we may not rely on a prophet even to remind us of a Halachah le'Moshe mi'Sinai that was forgotten! ANSWERS: (a) The MAHARATZ CHAYOS in Berachos (3a) explains that it depends whether Eliyahu ha'Navi is saying a Halachah as a prophecy, or Nevu'ah, from Hashem, or he is saying it as his own, personal opinion of Da'as Torah. In the latter case, we may accept it from him. When Rashi in Shabbos says that Eliyahu cannot teach us a Halachah, he means that Eliyahu cannot teach us Halachos as the Eliyahu *ha'Navi*, in his role as a prophet. But as a normal person, he is able to teach us Halachos. (b) Similarly, when Eliyahu is not saying a prophecy but is saying a Halachah that was once taught, we certainly accept it. Only when he teaches something that was never taught before and he is teaching it as a prophet, do we not accept it.

Eruvin 45 1) DESECRATING SHABBOS TO DEFEND A JEWISH CITY QUESTION: The Gemara cites a Beraisa which states that if gentiles attacked a Jewish city in order to loot and rob it, we may not desecrate Shabbos to defend it, since there is no concern of Piku'ach Nefesh. However, if that city was on the border of a larger Jewish area, then it is permitted to desecrate Shabbos to protect the city, even if the gentiles attacked it only to rob it. Even though their objective is to steal the Jews' money, we fear that they might conquer the entire city and obtain a stronghold from which to conquer further Jewish towns (thus creating a concern for Piku'ach Nefesh). Rav Nachman adds that in Bavel, Neharda'a is considered a border city. RASHI explains that Neharda'a was on the border between Jewish towns and gentile towns. What new teaching is Rav Nachman telling us

when he says that Neharda'a is "considered like" a border town. It *is* a border town! Why does Rav Nachman single out Neharda'a? ANSWER: The TORAS CHAIM suggests a different explanation than Rashi's. The Hagahos Ashiri says that outside of Israel, it is permitted to desecrate Shabbos in order to defend *any* city attacked by gentiles, even if they come only for money, and even if the city is not on the border of a larger Jewish area. The reason is because since the Jews outside of Israel live among the gentiles, every Jewish town is like a city next to a border, and being conquered by the gentiles will pose a significant threat to the Jewish populace. The Toras Chaim explains that this is what the Gemara here is teaching. Since Neharda'a was situated among the gentiles the same Halachah applied to it which applies to border towns, even though it is in the middle of a country. Perhaps this is also Rashi's intent as well. Rashi means to say that one might have thought that only if the Jewish city is on the border of a *country* do we fear that if the gentiles overtake that city that they will attempt to conquer the entire land -- in order to become a more powerful nation -- and therefore Piku'ach Nefesh is involved. Rav Nachman adds that even if the city is in the *middle* of a country, but it is bordering on a Jewish section of the country, we fear that the gentiles will, instead of just taking money, decide to try to torment the neighboring Jews -- just for the sake of persecuting the Jews -- and therefore the Jews must defend themselves.

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