

עטרת השבוע

Ateres HaShavua

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת שלח
כ"ג סיון תש"ן
June 5, 2010

Candle Lighting:	8:03
First זמן קריאת שמע:	8:33
Second זמן קריאת שמע:	9:09
First זמן תפלה:	9:59
Second זמן תפלה:	10:23
שקיעה	8:22
Earliest הברדלה:	9:12 (50 minutes)

All times are for The Five Towns

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דניאל ארי בן אברהם קדש ע"ה
Who was נפטר on
י"ז סיון

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Soro Shoshe Bas
R' Yechezkel A"H

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Double Trouble

Reuven Lehman, 12th Grade

In Parshas Shelach, the Torah writes, "Send for you men that they may spy out the land of Canaan. [13:2]" Our Parsha deals with the spies that were sent to Eretz Yisrael, their slanderous report, and the disastrous consequences which resulted. Last week's Parsha concluded with Miriam speaking lashon harah against Moshe and her being punished. Rashi, quoting from the Medrash Tanchuma, asks why these two Parshios were placed one next to the other. He explains that although Miriam was publicly punished for speaking against her brother, the spies, who had witnessed her punishment, didn't learn their lesson.

This idea seems to be in contradiction to the teaching of the Talmud. Rabi Elazar ben Prata said: "Come and see the power of lashon harah! If those that slandered trees and stones were so severely punished, how much greater will the punishment be for one who speaks badly about his friend," - [Erchin 15a]. If the spies' lashon hara on trees and stones was considered to be a less serious infraction than lashon hara on people, then how could they have been blamed for not learning a lesson from Miriam?

Rav Shlomo Ganzfried explains in the following manner. Some aveiros fall within the category of 'bein adam l'chaveiro' while others are 'bein adam laMakom.' Lashon harah is both. It causes anguish and harm to the person spoken about and at the same time belittles and degrades a creation of Hashem.

With that, we have gained a clearer understanding of the above mentioned statement of the Gemara. If the spies who spoke about trees and stones, and therefore only sinned against Hashem, were punished so severely, one who speaks about a person sins against both Hashem and man, and will certainly be punished. However, that applies when speaking against an ordinary person. Moshe, the most humble of all men, felt no pain or hurt when Miriam spoke against him. It was *(continued on page 3)*

Lack of Faith

Dovie Sturm, 11th Grade

As the incident goes, when Bnei Yisrael were in Kadesh Barnea, just south-east of Eretz Yisrael, they knew they were soon to enter the land. Before they actually went in, they petitioned Moshe to allow them to send spies ahead to search and reconnoiter the land first. However, the truth was that they already had the *Ananei Hakavod* and the Aron that always traveled ahead of the people, preparing the way and showing them where to go. If so, what did they need the spies for?

Bnei Yisrael offered several seemingly valid arguments to Moshe as to why the scouts were really so necessary. Firstly, they stated, the Canaanites were sure to hide away all of their precious objects and treasures before Bnei Yisrael arrived; therefore, it would be a good idea to send ahead spies to investigate all of their hiding places (Yalkut Shimoni). Secondly, there were halachic considerations to take into account. Moshe had taught Bnei Yisrael that they only had to destroy *avodah zara* that was being actively worshipped by the people. The spies could therefore go and check which idols the inhabitants were actually worshipping, so they would know which ones to destroy (Midrash Hagadah Devarim 1:22). There were also strategic considerations to take into account, such as which cities should be conquered first. Additionally, the spies could learn the native language, and perhaps uncover the enemy strategies (Rashi *ibid.*)!

The truth is, however, that these were all just excuses. If Bnei Yisrael had true emunah in Hashem, these problems would not have concerned them. The true reason why they sent spies was because they doubted Hashem's assurances about Eretz Yisrael. Although Hashem had promised them that it was a good land, no one from their generation had actually seen it. They wanted to see if it was really special enough to warrant such a major war to capture it (the war in Yehoshua's day took

(continued on page 3)

ATERES HASHAVUA

{Mussar from the Parsha}

By: Moshe Daphna

We find a striking contrast between the Meraglim- the villains of our Parsha- and Rachav, the heroine of this week's Haftorah. R' Yerucham Levovitz zt"l explains that because Klal Yisrael improperly demanded of Moshe Rabbeinu to send spies to scout out the land, Hashem left open for them a potential stumbling block. They did not sufficiently trust Hashem that He would protect them in Eretz Yisrael; therefore, they were let in to a situation where the Meraglim stated, "We cannot go up to that nation, for they are too strong for us."

Rachav, on the other hand, was fortunate to save herself and her family by courageously hiding the two spies Yehoshua Bin Nun had sent. She had heard about the miracles that Hashem had performed for Klal Yisrael and was inspired to act.

R' Yerucham elucidates this contrast further with a mashal. If one has a choice of investing with a wealthy man whose fortune is beginning to decline or a pauper whose fortune is starting to flourish, it is better to invest with the pauper because his "sun is on the rise." Similarly, Rachav, who was a spiritual pauper, was saved and eventually reached even levels of spirituality. In contrast, the Meraglim's fortune was on the decline because of the stumbling block placed before them, and consequentially they vanished from the scene. This episode emphasizes the significance of maintaining constant spiritual growth, and avoiding spiritual decline.

{Hashkafa from the Haftorah}

By: Daniel Slamowitz

This week's Haftorah: יהושע ב: א-כד

This week's *Haftorah* shows the power of perfect emunah and its miraculous results. The *Haftorah* begins with Yehoshua sending two special people on a secret mission to investigate the land of Eretz Yisrael. The Bnei Yisrael were camped directly facing the promised land, and Yehoshua wanted to determine the most strategic point of entry. This mission was extremely dangerous, because the land's inhabitants were well aware of the upcoming Jewish invasion of their land.

Yehoshua instructed the spies to survey all of Eretz Yisrael, but to devote special focus on Yericho. They crossed the Yarden and went directly to Rachav's inn, the first one inside the city's walls. The king discovered them immediately, and sent messengers to order Rachav to release the intruders. Out of the goodness of her heart, Rachav engaged herself in an unbelievable act of heroism. She quickly hid the spies and then convinced the king's messengers that the spies fled the city. Once the messengers were out of sight, she informed the spies that everyone was in awe of the Bnei Yisrael. She then proclaimed her personal recognition of Hashem as master of the universe and her firm belief that He would easily defeat all in His way.

It is only because of the perfect faith that these two spies had that their mission turned out to be so successful. Even in the face of danger and in enemy territory, these spies kept this complete emunah in Hakadosh Baruch Hu. This is a stark contrast to the spies that were sent by Moshe 40 years earlier. The ten spies who spoke slanderous reports about the land did not have full devotion to their mission and did not have the necessary emunah that was required of them to overcome their fears while scouting out the land. It was this lack of faith that led to their downfall.



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Focus on Greatness

By: Noam Charnowitz

Rav Yecheiel Michel Epstein zt"l

1829-1907

- Rav Yecheiel was born in the year 1829, in the town of Babruysk, in present day Belarus. His mother was the sister of the Netziv, the Rosh Hayeshiva of the Volozhiner Yeshiva.
- He was born into a wealthy family that was army contractors for the Czarist Russian army.
- When he was a young boy, he learned in a local yeshiva. This was due to the fact that his mother and the town Rabbi told him to do so. At that time, learning out of town was a new concept.
- A short while after he got married, he attained semicha, and took up his first Rabbinic position.
- Rav Yecheiel then became the Rav of Novozytkov, which is east of Minsk. This town had a large

number of Chasidim, mainly adherents of Lubavitch.

- He visited their Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and had a close relationship with him.
- Nine years after accepting the job in Novozytkov, in the year 1863, he was appointed as the Rav of Novardok, which was south of Minsk. There he served for thirty-four years, until his death.
- In Novardok he became recognized as *the* posek, and he also composed most of his works here. One of his most famous works was the Aruch Hashulchan.

Reuven Lehman (continued from page 1)

tantamount to speaking against trees and stones. Miriam's punishment showed that lashon harah is also an aveirah against Hashem, regardless of any person being harmed. That is what the spies should have learned from Miriam, but tragically didn't.

Rabbi Yisroel Ordman of the Telz Yeshiva of Lithuania offers another explanation. One must acquire the middah of seeing the good in everything. A person who finds fault with things will ultimately find faults in people. A person who always tries to find the good in things will also find the good in people.

It is true, as the Gemara taught, speaking against people is worse than speaking against trees and stones. At the same time, the spies should have learned from Miriam the importance of seeking virtues rather than faults. The spies saw faults, and as a result, that generation did not merit entering Eretz Yisrael. Still, Miriam was a person who saw the virtues in things and people, and this is a middah that we should all acquire so that we will all be able to live peacefully in Eretz Yisrael with the Beis Hamikdash.

Dovie Sturm (continued from page 1)

seven years). Furthermore, Canaan was full of giants, fortified cities, and the well-trained armies of thirty-six kings. How could Bnei Yisrael just walk in blindly without prior knowledge of the size of enemy troops and their strategies, and expect to be victorious? (Midrash Tanchuma)

While these may all seem like valid concerns to us, the Generation of the Wilderness was on a very high level, and Hashem therefore considered their doubts to be a deficiency in emunah.

Indeed, when Moshe presented the request to Hashem, Hashem responded by saying "*Shelach Lecha*" - send spies for *yourself*. Hashem did not order Moshe to send spies; he merely stated that He would not hold Bnei Yisrael back from doing so if they so desired. He knew that the spies had evil intentions, and were destined to bring back evil reports to Bnei Yisrael, thereby causing them to sin and be punished by having to wait an additional forty years in the desert.

Yet, this decision is somewhat difficult to understand. If Hashem knew that Bnei Yisrael was destined to err through the spies, and as a result be punished with death for most of that generation and an additional forty year delay in entering the land, why did Hashem allow Bnei Yisrael to send the spies? He could have denied permission, and Bnei Yisrael would have gone in immediately?

The Alshich offers one answer: Were Hashem to refuse Bnei Yisrael's request, they might assume that the land was not as good as Hashem had promised, and that is why He did not let them send spies. The *chillul Hashem* of Bnei Yisrael thinking that Hashem had deceived them was in fact worse than the eventual punishment they would have to face due to the spies.

However, the *Tiferes Zion* approaches it from a different angle. While Hashem foresees all future events, and knows exactly what people will do, He still gives everyone free choice. Although the motives for the sending of the spies were inherently wrong, the spies still had the option of bringing back a good report about Eretz Yisrael, and turning their mission into a success.

אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

"למטה יוסף למטה מנשה גדי בן סוסי..."

"To the Shevet of Menasha to the Shevet of Yosef, Gadi ben Susi..." (י"ג:א)

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l had a question on these pasukim. Earlier in the Parsha, just a few short pasukim before, the Torah mentions the *Nassi* of *Shevet Ephraim*, Menasha's brother and the child of Yosef as well. The question is, why did the Torah mention the general *Shevet* of Yosef over here by Menasha, and not by the *Shevet* of Ephraim? Both were sons of Yosef!

Rav Yaakov answers with an astute solution. He says that much earlier in the Torah, in *Parshas Vayechi*, the Torah tells us that Yaakov Avinu said to Yosef that Yosef's two sons were born before Yaakov came down to Egypt (i.e. Menasha and Ephraim), would be considered like Yaakov's own sons (they would be their own *Shevatim*, equal to Yaakov's children). However, since Yaakov said these two specifically, what would happen to other children of Yosef that were to be born later.

They would not be considered part of any *Shevet*!

So Yosef decided then that any of his future children would be grouped together in *Shevet Menasha*, Yosef's eldest child. (Also, as we know, the pasuk seems to imply that Yosef considered Menasha greater than his younger sibling, Ephraim.) Therefore, in this week's Parsha, *Parshas Shelach*, the Torah tells us "The *Shevet* of Menasha, the *Shevet* of Yosef..." since those other children of Yosef were included in this grouping. However, by Ephraim, the pasuk said no such thing, since all other children of Yosef were not with him.

We can also strengthen this idea by the fact that this is not the only place in the Torah where it writes "Bnei Yosef." Many times the Torah uses this term, implying the generic word for all descendents of Yosef, including those who really were not born part of Menasha or Ephraim.



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An Accounting of the Mitzvos

(based on the order of the mitzvos of the Sefer HaChinuch)

By: Motti Sturm

MITZVAH # 56 - Judgement of Damages
by Fire

Source: "כִּי תִצְאֵהוּ..." (Shemos 22:5)

Reason: It is obvious that the world needs laws and judgments or else society would not be able to function and people would not be able to live together. It is for this reason that Hashem gave us a set of laws regarding one who was not responsible and let his fire damage someone else's property, and certainly someone who purposely damages with fire.

Halachos:

- Because the Pasuk used the word "תִצְאֵהוּ" "breaks out", we learn that one is obligated to pay for damages caused by his fire even if the fire broke out on its own. The owner must be responsible to watch and make sure his fire does not break out to cause others harm. If it does, he is obligated to pay.
- The many details to this Mitzvah are explained in the 2nd and 6th Perakim of Bava Kamma.
- The Mitzvah to judge these cases only applies to men, because only men could judge in Beis Din.
- If a Beis Din does not sentence the one who caused damage to make a payment, it has disobeyed a Mitzvas Aseh (positive commandment).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people that have made this publication possible. Thank you to our dedicated Ateres HaShavua staff, our sponsors, and of course our loyal readership. Have a great summer!!!

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