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HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

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PARSHAT SHELACH 5783 • 2023










ISRAEL
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**וַיַּעַל בְּנֹגֵב,
וַיָּבֵא עַד-חֶבְרוֹן...
במדבר יג:כב**

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PARSHA WEEKLY

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Too Much Humility

Joshua and the Spies



Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

Often in the realm of leadership, decisions are not between good and bad but between bad and worse. In the theoretical world it is easy to divide the world between good and evil, but in the practical world, many dilemmas have elements of both. No matter what we decide there is a price to pay – there is no ideal decision. Nonetheless a decision must be made by the decision maker and this comes with complexity and fallout. When decisions are complex, they are often controversial and divisive. Courage, backbone and even some audacity is needed. In instances like this, humility is not the required quality.

According to the Targum Yonatan,¹ it was this very concern that Moshe had about Joshua's leadership ability. Joshua and Calev were now about to be pitted against the other ten scouts who would deliver a damning report about the land, essentially convincing the populace that it was not a good idea to enter it. This was going to be a rebellion of the highest order as entering into the land was the very purpose of the Exodus itself. The stakes were high as disqualification from entry into the land would have disastrous consequences. This would for sure be the greatest challenge of Joshua's life thus far. After all, it was Joshua who would soon be appointed as Moshe's successor. Here he would face a great challenge in needing to stand up for his values against the strong minded rebellious scouts who were about to lead the people to oblivion.

Would he have the backbone and mettle to do it?

In order to understand Moshe's concern we need to draw attention to an unusual *pasuk* at the beginning of the *parasha*. As

soon as we are introduced to all the scouts – one tribal leader representing each of the twelve tribes – the following strangely timed *pasuk* appears:

אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לְתוֹר אֶת הָאָרֶץ
וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֶׁעַ בֶּן נּוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

Those were the names of the participants whom Moshe sent to scout the land; but Moshe called Hoshea the son of Nun, Yehoshua. (Bamidbar 13:16).

Three questions emerge.

1. Why is Hoshea's name changed to Yehoshua – adding the *yud* from Hashem's name – at this *specific* point as we are introduced to the 12 scouts?
2. Why is it that only Hoshea's name is changed to Yehoshua and not Calev who is also going to need to stand up to the *Meraglim*?
3. Hoshea's name has already been changed to Yehoshua – he is consistently called Yehoshua on many previous occasions.² So why is it specifically pointed out at *this* juncture that his name was changed when indeed the name change seems to have happened much earlier?

The Targum Retort

Targum Yonatan offers a most unusual and perplexing explanation: "...When Moshe saw his (Hoshea's) **humility**, he changed his name to Yehoshua."

Moshe changes his name because Joshua is humble?! Isn't humility a good thing, arguably the greatest quality, the very quality that Moshe was praised for at the end of last week's *parasha*? Why is humility seen here as negative – something to be changed? How is it related specifically to the incident of the spies?

Turns out that too much of a good thing can be negative. Indeed, every quality no matter how good can also have negative expressions in different areas of life. Even arguably the greatest quality of all, humility, in certain situations is not only not our greatest asset but somehow our greatest weakness. Joshua, Moses' loyal servant, is soon to become his successor – a daunting task. Standing firm against the rebellious spies is about to be his greatest challenge. In this instance, his tolerant, self-effacing humility is something he must overcome.

The Temple was destroyed because of Humility

Our sages make an astonishing counterintuitive comment regarding the destruction of the second temple and attribute it this very quality of humility. Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Yossi³ indeed attribute the destruction squarely on the humility of one of the greatest rabbinic leaders at the time, Rabbi Zecharia ben Avkulis. This shocking assessment is a telling case study as to when humility is a major disadvantage.

The Talmud (Gittin 56) details at length the tragic story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza which ultimately led to the destruction of the Second Temple. When Bar Kamtza was shunned and he believed the rabbis did not protest his public shaming, he chose to exact vengeance on the Jewish people which ultimately led to the destruction of the Temple itself. He 'informed' the Romans that the Jews were about to rebel against them. His proof – they would not offer a sacrifice brought by the Romans to the Temple. When the Romans sent a sacrifice to check it out, Bar Kamtza made a blemish behind the animal's lip which disqualified it for the Jews but not for the Romans. The rabbis believed the right thing under the circumstances was to offer the forbidden blemished sacrifice in order to avoid angering the Romans and presenting a danger to Jewish life. Rabbi Zecharia ben Avkulis ruled against it with the argument that "people will say that it is permitted to offer blemished sacrifices on the Temple". When the sages argued further that Bar Kamtza would now go and inform the Romans that the sacrifice was not offered and this with potentially

devastating consequences, Rabbi Zecharia ben Avkulis once again argued that he should not be harmed as "people will say that it is permissible to kill a someone who offers a blemished sacrifice".

In the end the sacrifice was not brought and Bar Kamtza was not harmed. He went on to deceitfully relay the news of an imaginary Jewish rebellion which ultimately led to the destruction of the Temple. Rabbi Yochanan then very sharply opined "as a result of the humility of Rabbi Zecharia ben Avkulis the Temple was destroyed."

Compromise vs Confrontation

Rabbi Zecharia ben Avkulis was a humble purist, a person who could not bring himself to rule proactively on something controversial. It is true that it was a tough decision to bring a blemished sacrifice or to kill Bar Kamtza are both controversial and difficult to swallow, but it is equally true that *not* doing so is much worse and caused horrific long term destruction to the Jewish people. His humility prodded him to a stance of *שב ואל תעשה* – to take the conservative passive stance of not ruling proactively to allow a forbidding sacrifice or kill a fellow Jew.

Unfortunately in the harsh reality of life and leadership, very often our decisions are not between good and bad as previously mentioned, but between bad and worse. We have to choose the lesser evil. His humility and sensitivity lead to a passive stance where proactivity and courage were needed. The source of his greatness became the source of his weakness in this specific circumstance.

We find a similar account of criticism against Rabbi Zecharia ben Avkulis from a *halachic* case in the laws of Shabbat (Shabbat Tosefta 17,4). There is a *halachic* dispute as to whether bones and peels left over on the table on Shabbat are *muktzah* or not – whether they can be handled on Shabbat. Beit Hillel rules leniently that they may be handled whereas Beit Shammai rules they are *muktzah* and may not be handled directly – only removed. Rabbi Zecharia ben Avkulis rules like neither and picks something in-between: one can directly handle but only to quickly discard. Rabbi Yossi then remarks that

because of his humility the Temple was destroyed.

Why do the Sages strangely and totally out of context highlight Rabbi Zecharia's culpability for the destruction and what has it got to do with this specific ruling? It seems that this very compromising and cautionary nature of Rabbi Zecharia in not wanting to rule against either Beit Hillel or Shammai is what precipitated this condemnation. While being sensitive to both and not wanting to confront or contend with opposing views is admirable in this situation, it is damaging and harmful in others where firmness and tenacity are required.

Firm and Fearless

It emerges that one of the most holy, refined and desirable qualities of all, humility, is in very specific yet critical instances a great drawback and disadvantage. To be humble and self-effacing in the face of antagonistic and obstinate opposition to core Torah and moral values, is counterproductive. Backbone, courage and confrontation are required. In instances like this, the tolerant, accepting, synthesizing quality of humility gets in the way as it tragically did regarding the Temple's destruction. It is here where there is a need to overcome one's humbleness and take a strong stand as uncomfortable as it may be.

This was the very concern of Moshe Rabbeinu regarding his outstanding disciple, servant and successor, Hoshea. It is he who will be singled out as his successor because he possess the most important quality of a leader – *איש אשר רוח בו* – a person who has spirit within them, which is interpreted by Rashi and the Sages as *ידוע ללכת כנגד רוחו של כל אחד ואחד* – a person who has the ability to understand, tolerate and put up with different opinions (Rashi, Bamidbar 27, 18). This is the salient quality of a leader.⁴ It was therefore this quality that Yehoshua was first and foremost blessed with, which facilitated him being selected as the one to lead the Jewish people as per Moshe's request. Since Moshe knew Yehoshua very well, he also knew that his humility would be a great challenge in dealing with the rebellion of the spies. He needed the *yud*

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PERSONAL GROWTH

Appreciating OUR Creator



Rabbi Reuven Taragin
Educational Director, World Mizrahi
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

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“אני מאמין באמונה שלימה שהבורא יתברך שמו
הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים והוא לבדו עשה עושה ויעשה לכל המעשים.”¹

Continuous Creation

Last week, we saw that our Principles of Faith begin with the need to recognize Hashem as the Creator. A closer look at the first principle reveals that we are meant to see Hashem as Creator not just in the past, but in the present and future as well. The first principle describes Hashem as “*borei* – creating,” not “*barah* – created,” and singles Him out as “the (only) one who created, creates, and will create all beings.”

In our morning prayers, we sharpen this point by describing Hashem as renewing the world “*b'chol yom tamid* – each day, constantly.” Hashem does not need to destroy the world in order for it to cease existing. He would simply need to stop renewing it. Hashem's creation is not a thing of the past. It is an ever-present part of reality.

Our Creator

As part of the world Hashem constantly recreates, our existence also hinges on Hashem's continuous constant renewal. Sadly, we often forget that our lives are “G-d-given.”² Iyov is an example of someone who made this mistake. Though Iyov maintained his faith even after the loss of his children and possessions,³ he faltered when he lost his health.⁴ Iyov acknowledged his children and property as G-d-given, but saw his health as his own inalienable right. When Hashem allowed Satan to take his health away, Iyov felt that a line had been crossed.

Like Iyov, many take their existence and good health for granted. Their lack of appreciation for Hashem's continued sustenance skews their perspective on their lives and experiences.

Yirmiyahu HaNavi made this point when he asked those bemoaning about their suffering why “a living person should

complain”?⁵ The Midrash⁶ explains that Yirmiyahu used the term “living person” because one who appreciates Hashem's gift of life does not complain about his circumstances. Our appreciation of the gift of life should cause us to see the G-d who gifts it to us as good and compassionate. The Kuzari⁷ saw this as the deeper significance of the *Shehecheyanu berachah*. We recite this *berachah* at happy times to express recognition of and thanks to Hashem for sustaining our lives till this special moment. The Kuzari explains that this basic appreciation puts our eventual sickness and death in perspective.

Seeing What Is Invisible to the Eye

This appreciation of Hashem is a critical component of our identity, but it is hard for us to feel because we do not see Hashem's sustenance and providence. The Rambam⁸ explains that people believe what they see. Even if we know that Hashem sustains us, because we do not actually see it, we have a hard time appreciating it. As the Little Prince said: “It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”⁹

This is why we begin our prayers the moment we awake. That moment, when we regain consciousness after a night of (deathlike) sleep, is an opportunity to feel life restored to us. We express this appreciation with the *Modeh Ani* prayer. Though not yet able to mention Hashem's name before washing our hands, we take advantage of our first moment of renewed consciousness by immediately recognizing and thanking Him for reviving us.¹⁰

After we wash our hands, we repeat and elaborate upon this fact and mention Hashem by name in the *berachah* of *Elokai Neshamah*. We also commit ourselves to continue to express our appreciation of Hashem as creator and owner “*kol zeman*

she'ha'neshamah b'kirbi — as long as our soul remains within us.” Our appreciation of Hashem's renewal inspires us to seek to maximize future ones.

These first moments of each day are crucial. They determine our perspective on the coming day and on our lives in general. Many take these moments for granted. Missing the opportunity to remind themselves of their creator allows them to view their existence as random and meaningless.

By reciting *Modeh Ani* and *Elokai Neshamah*, we, in contrast, internalize the fact that Hashem has recreated us. We understand that we are Hashem's creatures placed here by Him for purposes and missions we aim to accomplish each day of the lives He grants us.

May we take advantage of our awakening each morning to appreciate Hashem as our continuous creator. May this appreciation help us live our lives as per His intention when creating us.

● *Writeup by Adina Lev and Rafi Davis*

1. Rambam to Mishnah Sanhedrin 10, Thirteen Principles of Faith: 1.
2. Interestingly, people often use the phrase “G-d-given” to refer to something they see as inalienable. We need to remember that though things that are G-d-given are not dependent upon the consent of other humans, they do, in fact, as the words imply, come from G-d, who needs to decide to give them to us.
3. Sefer Iyov 1:21.
4. Sefer Iyov 3:1.
5. Megillat Eichah 3:39.
6. Eichah Rabbah 3:13.
7. Sefer Kuzari 3:17.
8. Moreh Nevuchim 3:50
9. Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*
10. Our appreciation of Hashem's reviving us each morning serves as a precedent for and should strengthen our faith in Hashem's ultimate *techiyat hameitim* at the end of days. This is why we use the term “*emunah*” to describe both Hashem's reviving us in the morning – “*rabbah emunatecha*” and the eventual *techiyat hameitim* – “*v'ne'eman atah l'hachayot meitim*.”

HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

Haftarat Shelach: Hope & Repair



Rabbanit Shani Taragin
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

The *haftarah* for parashat Shelach (Yehoshua 2:1-24) tells of the spies sent by Yehoshua ben Nun to Yericho before crossing the Yarden to the Land of Israel. His plan immediately resonates with the one found in this week's *parasha*, initiated by his mentor, Moshe Rabbenu nearly forty years earlier. Moshe's mission did not end well; ten of twelve representatives of the nation returned with a negative report, the nation panicked and demanded to return to Egypt, and Hashem subsequently punished the entire generation with forty years of wandering in the wilderness until the generation died out. Yehoshua at that time was sent as a leader of his tribe of Ephraim, and together with Kalev ben Yefune of the tribe of Yehuda, returned from the expedition with a positive report of encouragement and trust in Hashem. The people, however, already disheartened by the disparaging words of the ten other spies, did not heed their leadership. Through careful comparing and security of Yehoshua's plan for sending spies to that of Moshe, we shall appreciate the lessons learned as Yehoshua prepares to lead the people to the land of Canaan for their second attempt.

Yehoshua, as opposed to Moshe, sends only two spies in a covert manner – “*cheresh*” (quietly) from the Sheetim so they may secretly infiltrate Yericho and report any weakness in the city's security system. Yehoshua's plan for sending “*meraglim*” is clearly one of military motive to spy and gather intelligence for the purpose of conquest. Moshe's mission of publicly sending a leader from every tribe was primarily “*la-tur*” – to explore the nature of the land and encourage the nation as a “pilot trip” for their imminent “*Aliyah*.” Moshe, however, also directs the spies with questions concerning feasibility of conquest - i.e. to find out if the enemy is

strong or weak, if the cities are fortified or open, etc. Perhaps this ambiguity led to confusion and a subjective military report. Yehoshua, therefore, chooses a different course of action, secretly sending only two unnamed spies with a clear tactical goal to collect military information. The RaDa”K quoting the Targum Yonatan, explains that “Yehoshua sent the men secretly so that THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL would be unaware of the mission, and therefore not discomfited by the thought of sending spies. Yehoshua, sent them only because he knew that they would be successful in their mission and would raise the spirits of the people with a positive report” (2:1).

In order to maintain anonymity and discretion, Yehoshua's spies enter the city under cover of darkness and choose the home of a harlot where travelers are wont to frequent. By staying at Rachav the harlot, they might also be able to gather gossip/intelligence about the city's nobles and generals and sense the mood of the city on the eve of *Bnei Yisrael's* entry into the land. The inhabitants of the city, clearly on high alert anticipating Israelite infiltration, quickly inform the king of spies lodging by Rachav. When Rachav hears the king's message to “hand over the men who have come to you,” she risks her life and hides the men in her roof under stalks of flax. Rachav, a “*zonah*” living on the socio-economic fringe of her society, exploited by others, chooses to embody the values of responsibility and commitment as she puts her life in danger for two men who are willing to do the same for their people.

The *parshanut* on the *parasha* is most apparent in Rachav's soliloquy and offer to the spies as she ascends to the roof where they are hidden. Rachav recalls the astounding reports of the splitting of the *Yam Suf* and the defeat of the Amorite

kings, bracketing events of the first and fortieth year of *Am Yisrael's* miraculous sojourn and survival in the wilderness. She describes the trepidation felt by every resident in Yericho, and then declares, “For G-d your Lord is G-d in heavens above and earth below!” Rachav recognizes the defeat of mighty forces as a Divine victory for the vanquished and oppressed in an otherwise bleak moral landscape. Rachav, the humble prostitute, understands the pain of dwelling in the ‘outer wall,’ and the acts of callousness and cruelty of Yericho and chooses to associate with a G-d of kindness. She therefore demands kindness in return – “Now, therefore pledge to me in the name of G-d that having acted with kindness towards you, that you will deal kindly with my family. Provide me with a true sign. Preserve my father and mother, my brothers and sisters and all that is theirs, and save our lives from death!” (2:12-13). The spies concede to act “in kindness and truth” and advise Rachav to make her household discernible to the Israelite invaders by suspending a ‘crimson cord,’ a “*tikvat choot hashani*,” a sign of hope of new beginnings. Rachav, like *Am Yisrael* in Egypt, must place crimson at the entrance of her home, identifying with the past and future of a people devoted to a G-d of kindness and truth.

After the failure of the first venture to enter the Land in this week's *parasha*, Hashem bemoans *Am Yisrael's* disregard of the many “signs” (*otot*) of divine power (Bamidbar 14:11). How striking that Yehoshua's spies exchange “signs” (*otot*) with Rachav the *zonah* from Yericho upon her recognition of Hashem's kindness. Through their interaction with Rachav, they were able to report to Yehoshua their military strategy – “Hashem has given the whole land into our hands; the inhabitants of the land even melt away before us” (2:24). The *haftarah* comes to provide

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Halachic Q&A



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council
Rosh Yeshiva, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

Question: As some members of our family are gluten free, we made two kilos of dough, one with regular flour and the other with gluten-free flour. Can we view these kilos as combined and take hafrashat challah from them?

Answer: Because we are careful not to combine these two types of flour, we do not view them as one batch and there is no *chiyuv* of *hafrashat challah* (Shulchan Aruch YD 326:1 and Nosei Keilim).

Question: What is Rav Rimon's opinion regarding techelet?

Answer: On the one hand, there are many reasons to assume that wearing *techelet* is correct and we are fulfilling a biblical commandment in doing so. On the other hand, many have tried to convince the *gedolim* to accept it but have not succeeded. Therefore, while it is nice to take on wearing *techelet*, as I do on my *tallit katan*, we should not view this as the accepted *halachic* ruling as most *gedolim* have not accepted it. (However, I do believe that *techelet* will become accepted as the masses continue to wear it).

It is for this reason that I chose not to wear *techelet* on my *tallit gadol* (although I may change that in the future). I chose to wear it on my *tallit katan* for two reasons. 1) It is always on me, including *tefillot*. 2) The Ibn Ezra writes that the main *mitzvah* of *techelet* is when one is out of the *beit kneset* in order to remember the *mitzvot* of Hashem.

I tie *techelet* using Rambam's tying method, but I add two knots at the beginning and end in order to fulfill the opinion of other *poskim* (Mishnah Berurah) even if it is not considered *techelet*.

Question: During kaddish/kedusha, should one respond with his personal nusach or use the nusach of the chazzan?

Answer: According to Rav Moshe Feinstein, you should respond based on the *nusach* of the *chazzan*. According to Rav Ovadya Yosef, you may respond using your own *nusach* because the *pesukim* are almost exactly the same. Additionally, the lines which come before the *pesukim* are only said as a *minhag* and therefore you can use your own *nusach*.

In practice, either option is acceptable. You should choose an option which will not confuse you, and *therefore* it may make sense to stick to your *nusach* on a consistent basis. However, you may do what you prefer.

Question: If a chazzan who davens nusach ashkenaz is leading davening in a shul which davens nusach sefard, can he daven nusach ashkenaz during his silent shmoneh esrei?

Answer: According to Rav Moshe Feinstein, he must say it in the *nusach* of the *tzibur* in order not to get confused. However, this is not an obligatory ruling, as one *davens* from a *siddur*. Therefore, if one knows that he will not get confused, he may *daven* his own *nusach* during the silent *shmoneh esrei* (Rav Ovadya Yosef).

Question: The minhag is to say "Tefilat Hashla" on Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan. This year, it falls on Shabbat. May one say this on Shabbat?

Answer: There is a dispute regarding whether one may pray for spiritual matters on Shabbat. The main opinion is that

it is permissible (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Elyashiv). Therefore, one may say this prayer on Shabbat.

Question: Is it proper to make a minyan on an airplane? Does it make a difference if 90% of the passengers are religious and wouldn't mind? If a minyan is happening anyway, can I join while sitting?

Answer: If there are many Jewish passengers, there is good reason to make a *minyan*. However, it must be done in a smart way, both in terms of location and length. If the majority are non-religious, it is possible and sometimes even recommended to make a *minyan* but you must be more careful not to bother others. If the *minyan* is not taking place in a proper manner, you should *daven* in your place. If you are close to the *minyan* you can join and answer "amen" and *kedusha*, etc.

Question: Should one make a bracha on putting a mezuzah at the entrance to an office (where one eats/works but does not sleep/live)?

Answer: Generally, we do not make a bracha when putting up *mezuzot* in offices. You can say the *bracha* without *Shem Umalchut* and add some *pesukim*. Here is a text to say:

ברוך אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לקבוע מזוזה.
שיר המעלות לשלמה אם ה' לא יבנה בית שוֹא עִמְלוּ
בוֹנֵי בֹא אִם ה' לֹא יִשְׁמְרֵ עִיר שׁוֹא שְׁקֵד שׁוֹמְרֵ ה'
יִשְׁמְרֵד מִכָּל רָע יִשְׁמֵר אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ. ה' יִשְׁמֵר צְאֻתְךָ וּבֹאֲךָ
מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

● Compiled by Yaakov Panitch.

פרשת המרגלים – דינמיקה של הסלמה רגשית

הרבנית שרון רימון
Tanach teacher and author



צֶלֶם מִמַּעַלֵיהֶם וְהָ אֶתְנֹו אֶל תִּירָאִם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל הָעֵדָה לְרָגֹם אֹתָם בְּאֲבָנִים” (ו-י)

בשלב זה, נפסק הדין ע"י התערבות הקב"ה, ומתברר שדברי המרגלים והעם הגיעו למשבר אמון גדול עד כדי כך שה' רוצה לכלות את עם ישראל. בזכות משה רבנו נמחל להם באופן חלקי, אך אותו דור הפסיד את האפשרות להכנס אל הארץ: "אם יראו את הארץ אשר נשבעתי לאבותיכם וכל מנאצי לא יראוה" (כג).

התבוננות בדברי המרגלים, ובאופן השפעתם על העם, מגלה דינמיקה של הידרדרות רגשית. המחשבות השליליות הולכות ומחמירות, צוברות תאוצה, עד שהן משתלטות על ההגיון ומביאות לחרדה. החרדה מביאה להימנעות – העם איננו מעז לעשות צעד לכיוון היעד הרצוי – ארץ ישראל, וכך הוא מפסיד את האפשרות לזכות להיכנס אל הארץ.

תפקידם של המרגלים היה לספר לעם על טוב הארץ ופרותיה, ובכך לזרוע בלבם תקווה והשתוקקות להגיע אל הארץ ולהתיישב בה. התקווה והאמון הבסיסי של העם (וכל אדם) בה' המוביל אותם בדרך, הם המאפשרים להתמודד עם כל קושי וחשש. מחשבות החרדה הן לכאורה ריאליות, אך למעשה הן אלה אשר מייצרות את המציאות של חולשה וחוסר אונים. רק כאשר העם (והאדם) יתגבר על החרדה ועל המחשבות השליליות, הוא יוכל לחזור לבטחון בה' וביכולתו להגיע אל היעד הנכסף והמובטח. בניית האמון והבטחון המחודש תיקח עוד שנים רבות, שנים של הסתובבות ותעיה במדבר, שנים של למידה שיובילו בסופו של דבר אל היעד הנכסף.

מתוך תחושת חוסר אונים, מגיעים המרגלים לראיית הקושי בצורה מועצמת ומוגזמת: "ארץ אכלת יושביה הוא וכל העם... בתוכה אגשי מדות: ושם ראינו את הנפילים בני ענק מן הנפילים..." (לב-לג) - המחשבות המפחידות מועצמות, והופכות את האויב לענק, בעל כח גדול מאד. במקביל למחשבות המועצמות את האויב, מגיעות מחשבות מקטינות על עצמם: "וְנָהִי יִבְעִינֵנוּ כְּחִגְבִּים". וככל שהם מרגישים קטנים וחלשים, כך גם האחרים תופסים אותם: "וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם". ככל שהמחשבות המחלישות מתגברות כך האדם הולך ומאבד את כחו, הולך ונחלש, ויכולת ההתמודדות שלו עם הסיטואציה הולכת וקטנה.

כאשר אין יכולת להתמודד עם הסיטואציה, מגיע הבכי: "וַתִּשָּׂא כָל הָעֵדָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכוּ הָעָם בְּלֵילָה הַהוּא" (י"ד, א). ובעקבות הבכי מגיעות מחשבות ייאוש קשות ביותר: "לו מתנו בארץ מצרים או במדבר הזה לו מתנו" (ב).

לצד משאלת המוות מגיעה מחשבת ייאוש נוספת: "ולמה ה' מביא אתנו אל הארץ הזאת לנפל בחרב נשינו ונפנו יהיו לבז... ויאמרו איש אל אחיו נתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה" (ג-ד) - העם חש שה' פועל נגדם, פוגע בהם, ומתוך כך הם רוצים להסתובב ולברוח, עד כדי כך שהם מעדיפים לחזור לשעבוד במקום לנסות להתמודד.

בשלב זה, הניסיון של היושע וכלב לשכנע את העם בטעותם, נדון לכשלון מוחלט. העם כבר לא מסוגל לחזור בו מהמחשבות השליליות, ורוצה לפגוע במי שאומר להם אחרת: "ויהושע בן נון וכלב בן יפנה... ויאמרו אל כל עדת בני ישראל לאמר... טובה הארץ מאד מאד... אל תיראו את עם הארץ כי לחמנו הם סר

פרשת המרגלים היא אחת הפרשיות העצובות והכואבות בתולדות עם ישראל. רגע לפני הכניסה לארץ, עם ישראל נעצר, מאבד את הזכות להכנס לארץ, ונשאר 40 שנה במדבר, עד מותם של כל אנשי אותו הדור.

כיצד התרחש השינוי הקיצוני הזה? כיצד הפכו נשיאי העם משליחים למחלישים ומכשילים?

ננסה לעקוב אחר התהליך העובר על נשיאי העם, המרגלים, ועל העם השומע אותם:

בשלב ראשון, המרגלים שבים אל משה ואל העם ומראים את הפירות הטובים, ואף מעידים שהארץ טובה, זבת חלב ודבש: "באנו אל הארץ אשר שלחתנו וגם זבת חלב ודבש הוא וזה פריה" (י"ג, כז). אולם, מיד לאחר מכן הם מציגים את הקושי: "אפס כי עז העם הישב בארץ והערים בצורות גדולות מאד וגם ילדי הענק ראינו..." (כח). - השימוש במילה "אפס" מראה שכל הטוב איננו שווה בעיניהם לעומת הקושי. לא זו בלבד שהם מעמידים את הקושי מול הטובה, אלא שהם מאפסים, מקטינים ומגמדים את הטוב.

לעומת עדת המרגלים עומד כלב, ומנסה להוביל מחשבה חיובית: "ויהס כלב... ויאמר עלה נעלה וירשנו אתה כי יכול נוכל לה" (ל) - כלב מזכיר לעם שגם אם יש קושי, ואפילו אם הוא גדול - אנחנו מסוגלים להתמודד עם זה.

אל מול המחשבה החיובית של כלב, טוענים המרגלים: "לא נוכל לעלות אל העם כי חזק הוא ממנו" (לא). בשלב זה, המרגלים מוסיפים לעובדות את ההרגשה שהעם איננו מסוגל להתמודד עם הקושי. כאשר אדם מסתובב עם הרגשה או אמונה שהוא לא יכול להתמודד, אין לו סיכוי למצוא פתרון ומוצא.

Continued from page 3

of G-d's name added to his to have Divine assistance in overcoming this humility to deal with the spies. This also explains why Calev did not need any Divine assistance as we see from Calev's actions that he was a much more forceful personality and was able to stand up to the spies. It is perhaps this same quality which disqualified him from being the ultimate leader, Moshe's successor as a unifying and tolerant leader.

May we all be blessed with the critical quality of humility – being humble and

self-effacing and able to tolerate all types of people. At the same time, where the honor of G-d and core values are at stake, particularly when dealing with antagonistic uncompromising people, we should be blessed to have the courage and audacity to make the necessary tough decisions in choosing the lesser evil for the sake of Heaven.

1. One of the most ancient biblical commentaries is of Yonatan ben Uziel who was a student of Hillel HaZaken.

2. In the battle against Amalek where he is referred to as Yehoshua on 4 occasions (Shemot 17); at the Golden Calf (Shemot 33:11) and in last week's parasha Behaalotecha, (Bamidbar 11:28).
3. Talmud Bavli, Gittin 56a and Tosefta Shabbat 17,4 respectively.
4. This was also the signature quality of the great Hillel HaZaken, whose humility led him to have the most remarkable, almost superhuman tolerance and patience with people who would otherwise be most frustrating and irritating to deal with. This is evident in the famous story (Masechet Shabbat, 30b) on erev Shabbat of the two Jews who did everything in their power to anger Hillel and were unable to do so. This is clear evidence how the quality of humility is directly related to the ability to tolerate other people.

How Do You See Yourself?



Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

One verse in the *Shelach Lecha* Torah portion reveals an important secret:

Spies are sent out to survey the Land of Israel and most of them return to their people in the desert with a negative report. After encountering the residents of the Land, they say it makes no sense to journey there. In the course of their discussion, they utter these significant words: “And we seemed like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we were in their eyes.”

In other words, first we saw ourselves as grasshoppers, as weak individuals, and therefore that was how those we encountered saw us too. After we saw ourselves as small and meek, lacking self-confidence, without hope – we were similarly evaluated by those we met in the Land of Israel.

Yet wasn't it G-d who told Moshe Rabbeinu to send the spies on this mission and also promised that it would be successful? So what was the source of the spies' weakness?

What was true in the desert is true today as well: Our self-image is the foundation of our attitude, of how we see ourselves and of how others see us. If we see ourselves as self-confident, if we go out into the world with optimism, faith, and a vision for the future, others will see us that way too.

This week is an ideal time to decide who we want to be.



A reader from Carmiel sent me a notice last year regarding “Kikar Miami.” At first glance, it looked like any other restaurant advertisement until I read the fine print: Each patron who says something positive or optimistic about the Land of Israel would receive a 10% discount. The discount was meant to coincide with the

Shelach Torah portion, where most of the spies who scouted the Land of Israel returned with a gloomy and pessimistic report.

I called the restaurant. One of the workers told me how people who came to the restaurant praised Israel's highly diversified landscape that includes deserts as well as snowy mountains. Some customers explained that the fruits, vegetables, and cheeses in Israel are the tastiest in the world. Others mentioned the special holiness of the Land. And then there were new immigrants who shared their *aliyah* stories and how emotional it was to see with their own eyes how the prophecy of the ingathering of the exiles has been fulfilled.

I asked about the proprietor and his story. So let me just say: “Pleased to make your acquaintance, Paltiel Koenigsberg.” Now 41 years old, he owned two restaurants in Miami, Florida, until three years ago. He was born in New York and his wife is originally from Venezuela. His wife's sisters married Israelis who had moved to the United States and it was ironically through these former Israelis that he began to fall in love with the Land of Israel.

During the corona pandemic he began to understand that Miami was not his home. His family sold the restaurants and left for Israel. Paltiel made *aliyah* with his wife and six children (meanwhile a seventh child was born in Israel), his three sisters and their families, and his mother-in-law, a total of 25 new immigrants in all.

He had never heard the word Carmiel until his arrival in Israel. He had originally thought to live in Beit Shemesh because of the large American community there. But in traveling through Israel, the family fell in love with the North in general and with Carmiel in particular.

“When I first came up north,” he recalled, “suddenly everything was calm. Even the children in the back seat stopped fighting.

“We arrived in Israel exactly two years ago during parashat Shelach and the story of the spies and their negative report about the Land. Only two spies – Kalev and Yehoshua – were optimistic. We too felt a little like spies when we first came to Israel to check it out but our impressions were out of this world. From one day to the next we feel less American and more Israeli. We thought about how to mark the anniversary of our *aliyah* and now, since we have our own business in the Land of Israel, we decided to share our story with the public.”

The Shelach discount is now over, but you can still continue the spirit of it.



About 700,000 high school students in Israel begin summer vacation in the coming weeks, and as Rabbi Yaakov Edelstein, zt”l, used to say: “Now the real school year begins.”

After all, summer vacation is not a vacation from values or from anything that is important to us. It's a vacation from school alone.

In a certain sense, during vacation we see who we truly are. When there are no school bells, teachers, or exams, we make decisions on our own – when to get up and when to go to sleep, how to fill up the day, how to relate to our surroundings. Indeed, most of our lives are lived outside the school system hours imposed by the Ministry of Education. And therefore, summer vacation is an authentic taste of life, the most important semester of the year. Now that summer vacation is upon us, the real school year begins.

May our children – and we, too – enjoy success in the weeks ahead.

For the Shabbat Table



Rabbi Danny Mirvis

Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi

Rabbi of Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**T**hese are the names of the men who Moshe sent to spy out the Land, and Moshe called Hoshea bin Nun, ‘Yehoshua’” (Bemidbar 13:16).

This week’s Parsha commences with the episode of the spies. All the spies apart from Calev and Yehoshua returned from the Land with a gross misrepresentation of what they had seen, causing the Israelites to wander in the Wilderness for forty years, gradually dying out until a new generation would be ready and deserving to enter the Land. Prior to sending the spies, we are informed that Moshe changed Hoshea bin Nun’s name to “Yehoshua”. Rashi explains this change of name: “He (Moshe) prayed for him (Yehoshua), ‘May Hashem save you from the conspiracy of the spies’” (Rashi, Bemidbar 13:6).

By adding the letter “*yud*” to Hoshea’s name, Moshe changed its meaning from “saves” to “Hashem saves”, in an act of prayer that Yehoshua would not be negatively affected by the accompanying spies. Whilst we can understand Moshe’s intention in praying for Yehoshua, are we not forgetting somebody? What about Calev? He also risked his life in a heroic effort to oppose the spies. With two righteous spies in danger, why did Moshe only change Yehoshua’s name?

An explanation can be found within Targum Yonatan ben Uziel’s Aramaic translation of this verse: “These are the names of the men who Moshe sent to spy out the Land, and when he saw his humility, Moshe called Hoshea bin Nun, ‘Yehoshua’”. (Targum Yonatan ben Uziel, Bemidbar 13:16).

Within his translation, the Targum adds a specific trait of Hoshea’s which prompted Moshe to be concerned for him – “When he saw his humility” – Moshe was concerned that Hoshea’s great humility put him at risk and therefore prayed for him and added Hashem’s name to his.

Whilst we can now understand why Moshe only changed Hoshea’s name and not Calev’s, this explanation raises a different question. What is wrong with humility? Surely Moshe, of all people, should appreciate the great value of humility. At the end of last week’s Parsha, less than 30 verses ago, we read, “And the man Moshe was very humble – more than any person on the face of the earth” (Bemidbar 12:3). Why was Hoshea’s humility such a cause for concern?

Despite being the most humble person on the face of the planet, Moshe was aware that humility has a potential downside. Hoshea’s challenge was not only to see

the good in the Land despite those around him, but to show the courage and leadership to oppose them. Moshe feared that Yehoshua’s humility would make him think, “Who am I to take a prominent role?”, “Who am I to challenge the leaders of the tribes?”, “Who am I to put myself in the limelight and enter the national stage?” He therefore changed his name in prayer that despite his great humility, he could rise to face the great challenges that lay before him.

Humility is one of the most vital traits in developing our relationships with those around us and Hashem above. Nevertheless, there are times which demand courage and call out for public displays of leadership. Whilst always working towards developing humble personalities, we should never let humble thoughts prevent us from taking necessary stands. When a nation is crying out for leadership, what use is the humble person who opted to sit on the fence or stay at home?

By combining humility with leadership, may we all merit Moshe’s prayer of “Yehoshua” – “Hashem will save”.

Shabbat Shalom!

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a different and more accurate picture than reported by Moshe’s spies. Had the original spies looked carefully, listened and evaluated objectively based on their experiences, they would have all agreed with Kalev and Yehoshua – “If Hashem delights in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it unto us—a land which floweth with milk and honey.”

The *haftarah* teaches us significant messages of hope and repair. Yehoshua boosts the people’s morale through “revisiting” the sins of the past and providing an opportunity for change of course and perspective. Rachav serves as a microcosm of willfully choosing a different moral path based on recognizing the acts of kindness and truth of Hashem. The “spies” of Moshe

are described as “*tarim*”, whereas those sent by Yehoshua are called “*meraglim*”, “*anashim*” and ultimately as “*malachim*” (Yehoshua 6:25), encouraging transformation and repair, realizing who we really are and who we can yet become as individuals and a nation!

Two Kinds of Fear



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

One of the most powerful addresses I ever heard was given by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, on this week's *parsha*, the story of the spies. For me, it was nothing less than life-changing.

He asked the obvious questions. How could ten of the spies have come back with a demoralising, defeatist report? How could they say, we cannot win, the people are stronger than us, their cities are well fortified, they are giants and we are grasshoppers?

They had seen with their own eyes how G-d had sent a series of plagues that brought Egypt, the strongest and longest-lived of all the empires of the ancient world, to its knees. They had seen the Egyptian army with its cutting-edge military technology, the horse-drawn chariot, drown in the Reed Sea while the Israelites passed through it on dry land. Egypt was far stronger than the Canaanites, Perrizites, Jebusites and other minor kingdoms that they would have to confront in conquering the land. Nor was this an ancient memory. It had happened not much more than a year before.

What is more, they already knew that, far from being giants confronting grasshoppers, the people of the land were terrified of the Israelites. They had said so themselves in the course of singing the Song at the Sea:

The peoples have heard; they tremble;
Pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.

Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
Trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;
All the inhabitants of Canaan have

melted away.
Terror and dread fall upon them;
Because of the greatness of your arm,
they are still as a stone.
Ex. 15:14-16

The people of the land were afraid of the Israelites. Why then were the spies afraid of them?

What is more, continued the Rebbe, the spies were not people plucked at random from among the population. The Torah states that they were "all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel." They were leaders. They were not people given lightly to fear.

The questions are straightforward, but the answer the Rebbe gave was utterly unexpected. *The spies were not afraid of failure*, he said. *They were afraid of success.*

What was their situation now? They were eating manna from heaven. They were drinking water from a miraculous well. They were surrounded by Clouds of Glory. They were camped around the Sanctuary. They were in continuous contact with the Shechinah. Never had a people lived so close to G-d.

What would be their situation if they entered the land? They would have to fight battles, maintain an army, create an economy, farm the land, worry about whether there would be enough rain to produce a crop, and all the other thousand distractions that come from living in the world. What would happen to their closeness to G-d? They would be preoccupied with mundane and material pursuits. Here they could spend their entire lives learning Torah, lit by the radiance of the Divine. There they would be no more than one more nation in a

world of nations, with the same kind of economic, social and political problems that every nation has to deal with.

The spies were not afraid of failure. They were afraid of success. Their mistake was the mistake of very holy men. They wanted to spend their lives in the closest possible proximity to G-d. What they did not understand was that G-d seeks, in the Hasidic phrase, "a dwelling in the lower worlds". One of the great differences between Judaism and other religions is that while others seek to lift people to heaven, Judaism seeks to bring heaven down to earth.

Much of Torah is about things not conventionally seen as religious at all: labour relations, agriculture, welfare provisions, loans and debts, land ownership and so on. It is not difficult to have an intense religious experience in the desert, or in a monastic retreat, or in an ashram. Most religions have holy places and holy people who live far removed from the stresses and strains of everyday life. There was one such Jewish sect in Qumran, known to us through the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there were certainly others. About this there is nothing unusual at all.

But that is not the Jewish project, the Jewish mission. G-d wanted the Israelites to create a model society where human beings were not treated as slaves, where rulers were not worshipped as demigods, where human dignity was respected, where law was impartially administered to rich and poor alike, where no one was destitute, no one was abandoned to isolation, no one was above the law and no realm of life was a morality-free zone. That requires a

society, and a society needs a land. It requires an economy, an army, fields and flocks, labour and enterprise. All these, in Judaism, become ways of bringing the Shechinah into the shared spaces of our collective life.

The spies feared success, not failure. It was the mistake of deeply religious men. But it was a mistake.

That is the spiritual challenge of the greatest event in two thousand years of Jewish history: the return of Jews to the land and state of Israel. Perhaps never before and never since has there been a political movement accompanied by so many dreams as Zionism. For some it was the fulfilment of prophetic visions, for others the secular achievement of people who had decided to take history into their own hands. Some saw it as a Tolstoy-like reconnection with land and soil, others a Nietzschean assertion of will and power. Some saw it as a refuge from European antisemitism, others as the first flowering of messianic redemption. Every Zionist thinker had his or her version of utopia, and to a remarkable degree they all came to pass.

But Israel always was something simpler and more basic. Jews have known virtually every fate and circumstance between tragedy and triumph in the almost four thousand years of their history, and they have lived in almost every land on earth. But in all that time there only ever was one place where they could do what they were called on to do from the dawn of their history: to build their own society in accord with their



Faith is the courage to take risks. It is not certainty; it is the ability to live with uncertainty.

highest ideals, a society that would be different from their neighbours and become a role model of how a society, an economy, an educational system and the administration of welfare could become vehicles for bringing the Divine Presence down to earth.

It is not difficult to find G-d in the wilderness, if you do not eat from the labour of your hands, and if you rely on G-d to fight your battles for you. Ten of the spies, according to the Rebbe, sought to live that way forever. But that, suggested the Rebbe, is not what G-d wants from us. He wants us to engage with the world. He wants us to heal the sick, feed the hungry, fight injustice with all the power of law, and combat ignorance with universal education. He wants us to show what it is to love the neighbour and the stranger, and say, with Rabbi Akiva, “Beloved is humanity because we are each created in G-d’s image.”

Jewish spirituality lives in the midst of life itself, the life of society and its institutions. To create it we have to battle with two kinds of fear: fear of failure, and fear of success. Fear of failure is common; fear of success is rarer but no less debilitating. Both come from the re-

luctance to take risks. Faith is the courage to take risks. It is not certainty; it is the ability to live with uncertainty. It is the ability to hear G-d saying to us as He said to Abraham, “Walk on ahead of Me” (Gen. 17:1).

The Rebbe lived what he taught. He sent emissaries out to virtually every place on earth where there were Jews. In so doing, he transformed Jewish life. He knew he was asking his followers to take risks, by going to places where the whole environment would be challenging in many ways, but he had faith in them and in G-d and in the Jewish mission whose place is in the public square where we share our faith with others and do so in deeply practical ways.

It is challenging to leave the desert and go out into the world with all its trials and temptations, but that is where G-d wants us to be, bringing His spirit to the way we run an economy, a welfare system, a judiciary, a health service, and an army, healing some of the wounds of the world and bringing, to places often shrouded in darkness, fragments of Divine light.

AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- What are the challenges of staying connected to G-d while living in the “real world”?
- Why might G-d ask us to live this harder life?
- How can we “bring heaven down to earth”?

Minyan for Devarim Sheb'kedushah



Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

עד מתי לעדה הרעה הזאת.

How long shall this evil congregation exist. (Bamidbar 14:27)

Based on this *passuk*, the Gemara in Megillah (23b) establishes that *devarim sheb'kedushah* (matters of sanctity) – such as *Kaddish*, *Kedushah*, and *Barchu* – require a quorum of ten men. The term עדה in this *passuk* has the connotation of ten men, since of the twelve *meraglim*, only ten, the רעה הרעה, gave an evil report about Eretz Yisrael.

On this basis, the Mishnah in Sanhedrin (2a) establishes that a *beis din* for the purpose of *dinei nefashos* (capital crimes) is composed of twenty-three *dayanim*. The *passuk* states, “And the congregation shall judge ... And the congregation shall save” (Bamidbar 35:24-25), implying that *dinei nefashos* require that the *beis din* include an עדה that argues to convict and an עדה that argues to acquit.

The Mishnah explains that since each עדה represents ten *dayanim*, we know that we must have at least twenty *dayanim*. Given that a two-vote majority is necessary to convict and a *beis din* cannot consist of an even number of *dayanim*, we arrive at a total of twenty-three.

The Gemara in Megillah proceeds to connect the term עדה with the word חוק, as found in the *passuk* referring to the rebellious congregation of Korach, the הבדלו מתוך העדה הזאת, “Separate yourselves from amid this congregation” (Bamidbar 16:21). Therefore, when the *passuk* instructs, – ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל – “And I shall be sanctified among the *Bnei Yisrael*” (Vayikra 22:32), it indicates that a *davar sheb'kedushah*, through which Hashem is to be sanctified, requires a *minyan* of ten men.

The Mishnah Berurah (Orach Chaim 55:47) quotes a *teshuvah* of the Rambam (Pe'eir HaDor, siman 71) regarding whether Karaites may count for a *minyan* for *devarim sheb'kedushah*. The Rambam contends that an *apikores* who does not believe in the veracity of Torah SheBe'al Peh and the statements of Chazal cannot be *mitztareif* to (join) a *minyan*.

Of note, Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe*, Orach Chaim 1:23) argues that Chazal (Arachin 15a) comment that the *meraglim* were themselves *apikursim*, as they understood the spies' words, כי חזק הוא ממנו – “for it is stronger than we” (Bamidbar 13:31), to mean, “for it is stronger than Him.” The *meraglim* here made a heretical statement, intending that the nation of Canaan is stronger than Hashem. Nevertheless, the *meraglim* constituted an עדה, indicating that *apikursim* do, in fact, count towards a *minyan*.

We usually assume, however, that we learn from the *meraglim* merely that an עדה consists of ten men, but not necessarily that individuals such as the *meraglim* themselves would constitute a *minyan*. This begs the question, however, of why the *meraglim* serve as Chazal's source that ten men are required for *devarim sheb'kedushah*, especially if the *meraglim* themselves would not have actually qualified for a *minyan*!

Perhaps we may suggest an answer based on the idea that the principal place for the *tziruf* (combination) of *Klal Yisrael* is in Eretz Yisrael, the National Homeland of the Jewish People. The Avnei Nezer (Orach Chaim 314:4) writes that this idea is implicit in the Rambam's *Sefer HaMitz-*

vos (*mitzvas asech* 153).

The Rambam writes that *kiddush hachodesh* (the sanctification of the month) and *ibbur hashanah* (the intercalation of the year) are functions that the Sanhedrin may perform only in Eretz Yisrael. He adds that if a Jewish presence were ever to cease to exist in Eretz Yisrael, חליה *לקל מעשות זאת – “G-d should forbid this from occurring,” we would be unable to establish a day as *Rosh Chodesh* (and, by extension, *Yom Tov*) based on the calculations of Jews in *chutz laAretz*, because this function must be executed by the *kahal* of *Klal Yisrael*. The

Jews of *chutz laAretz* have *kedushas Yisrael*, but they do not constitute *Klal Yisrael*.

Rav Soloveitchik (*Divrei Hagus V'Ha'arachah*, pp. 114-115) explained that, essentially, all of *Klal Yisrael* is required for the recitation of *devarim sheb'kedushah*: *Kaddish*, *Kedushah*, and *Barchu* may be recited in the presence of a *minyan* of ten men because they represent the entirety of *Klal Yisrael*. At the time of the travels in the *midbar*, the twelve *meraglim* were the only Jews who had ever visited Eretz Yisrael, and, as we noted, it is only in Eretz Yisrael that we can speak of a *tziruf* of Jews. The Jews outside of Eretz Yisrael, though they may be numerous, are only considered *yechidim* (individuals). This may be why the Gemara chose to derive the *halachah* that ten men are required for *devarim sheb'kedushah* from the *meraglim* – since they had the distinction of having been in Eretz Yisrael, and they therefore represent the body of *Klal Yisrael*.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha II.

The Right And Wrong Approach To Our Challenges



Rabbi Yisroel Reisman
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The climax of Parshas Shelach and what is often most spoken about is the *Cheit HaMeraglim* (Sin of the Spies) which ultimately caused *Klal Yisrael* to continue their journey in the *Midbar* for 40 years. The question is asked: how could it be that ten of the leaders of *Klal Yisrael* could become *Reshaim*? What could have caused them to speak in such ways about *Eretz Yisrael* and feel staying in the *Midbar* was a better option?

The Ramban explains the deeper significance as to why the actions of the *Meraglim* were so terrible. The goal of this mission of Moshe Rabbeinu was for a strategy of how to conquer *Eretz Yisrael* through observing the inhabitants and see how an army may succeed in cultivating the land. Not just how to succeed but to inquire about how it can be done *b'derech hateva* – in a natural way as opposed to Hashem's complete open influence on the outcome. Ultimately, the goal in one word for the *Meraglim* for this task in *Eretz Yisrael* was "how". The problem is they created a reality for themselves where entering into *Eretz Yisrael* was a matter of "if" – to investigate if going into *Eretz Yisrael* is the right thing and if it is realistic to be victorious. This was the root of their mistake. Even though they were our leaders, the failure in understanding their requirements is what caused (according to the Ramban) our extensive wandering.

The Steipler Gaon ZT"l, in his *sefer Birkas Peretz*, adds to this point based on what is seemingly a contradiction in Rashi. Rashi

(13:3) first describes the *Roshei Bnei Yisrael* as "*Kasheirim Hayu*" – they were good people when they first set out for *Eretz Yisrael*. In the following *Aliyah* (13:26) Rashi there says "*Ma Biasan B'Eitzah Ra'ah, Af Halichasan B'Eitzah Ra'ah*" – just as when they returned with a bad plan so too when they left towards *Eretz Yisrael* so too they had a bad plan. The inconsistency in and what becomes challenging for us is what was the initial intention and mindset of the *Meraglim*? Was it already from the beginning they had planned to say negative things about *Eretz Yisrael* or was it only after they had visited did this opinion arise?

The Steipler's beautiful explanation can be connected back to the Ramban. He says the mindset of the *Meraglim* is dependent on how we understand what the purpose of their mission was – "how" or "if". When Rashi teaches that they were good people, the Steipler explains that this was before they had been given this assignment. After receiving the job there was a certain level of haughtiness that came along with it which caused them to believe that they knew what was best for *Klal Yisrael* and could make these decisions for them. Only they could know whether or not the possibility of conquering *Eretz Yisrael* was a realistic possibility with the soldiers they had. The original plan of seeing how they should go about fighting this war became a matter of whether or not a positive outcome was even feasible. This *Eitzah Ra'ah* was already within them before ever setting out towards the land. This change of

mindset as a result of a lack of proper perspective of the roles they were given caused the downfall and long haul in the desert.

In the second *Perek* of Yehoshua, we are taught that once again there were spies being sent out to *Eretz Yisrael* to scout the land and those that dwell there. After the negligence of the *Meraglim* in *Sefer Bamidbar*, why would Yehoshua, who saw this firsthand, think the right thing to do was to use *Meraglim* again?

The Chasam Sofer at the beginning of our Parsha teaches that the idea of sending them out was not a bad idea when it was in the context of seeing "how" it should be done. Once it became a question of "if" this is a good option for the Jewish people only then was this considered to be the *cheit* of the *Meraglim*. Yehoshua's decision emphasised the point that Moshe Rabbeinu did not make a mistake here, rather it was the change made by the people that caused this to be an issue.

In our lives as well, we know that Hashem puts us in many situations that seem less than ideal and cause us to approach them with a mindset of "if" rather than "how". We must remind ourselves that He is *HaMeichin Mitzadei Gaver* – sets a person's footsteps – and the position we are in is because we are supposed to be. Now it is a matter of how we should approach it.

● Edited by Zac Winkler.

One Small Letter



Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis KBE
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

Have you ever heard of a letter transplant? That is the best way for us to describe the explanation given in the Talmud Yerushalmi for the change of name from Hoshea to Yehoshua, at the beginning Parashat Shelach Lecha.

For Hoshea's name to become Yehoshua, an extra 'yud' is needed. Where did that 'yud' come from? The Yerushalmi explains that the 'yud' came from the name Sarai, mother of our people, wife of Avraham, when her name changed to become Sarah. So we therefore had a free 'yud' which was taken from Sarai and added to the name of Hoshea, to enable him to become Yehoshua.

That is very sweet but what is the Talmud really trying to convey to us? I would

like to suggest that it was important for Yehoshua, prior to going into the land on that mission of spies, accompanied by so many negative influences, to internalise the key elements of Sarah's personality.

The first was "*Chibat Ha'aretz* - Her natural love for the land." This is what prompted Sarah, together with Avraham Avinu, to make *Aliyah*. To engage in that "Lech Lecha," that momentous and very difficult *Aliyah* from the diaspora to the Holy Land.

And similarly, Yehoshua would need "*Chibat Ha'aretz* - A natural love for the land." To appreciate its majesty, its beauty, its centrality in our lives, when he would return with his report.

Secondly, Sarah recognised the impact of negative influences. That is why she

was so concerned about her son Yitzchak, that he shouldn't be influenced negatively by his half-brother Yishmael. Similarly, Moshe was concerned that Yehoshua would be negatively influenced by the other spies around him, except of course for Kalev.

In this very special year of the 75th anniversary of the State of Israel, we should be just like Sarah and Yehoshua - to have that natural "*Chibat Haaretz*." To love the land and to appreciate how fortunate we are to have Israel as the central feature of our Jewish lives. And also to guarantee, that we should not be dissuaded from that love by those influencers who portray an unfairly negative image of Israel within our society. And we learn all of this from the intriguing letter transplant.

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Tzizit – Sewing the Loose Ends



Rabbi Shalom Rosner
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

In this week's *parsha* we are introduced to the *mitzva* of *tzizit*. A lot has been written about the reasoning behind this *mitzva*. We have mentioned Rav Soloveitchik's view of the significance of *tzizit* as a symbol of our servitude to Hashem, a *kavla de'avda*, a certain signet or stamp that a slave wears to indicate his inferior status. (See *Shalom Rav*, Koren Publishers). This year we will convey the message of *tzizit* as depicted by the Meshech Chochma.

Hashem created the world and, in a sense, "handed it off" to man to perfect. At the completion of the six days of creation we are told:

כי בו שבת מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא אלוקים לעשות – for thereon He abstained from all His work that G-d created to do. The last word of the *pasuk* – "*la'asot*" (to do) seems superfluous. It could have ended with a statement that G-d abstained from all the work that he created – what is the addition of the word *la'asot* coming to teach us? Perhaps it is to establish that after G-d completed his creation, He is now passing the baton to man to act and to continue to perfect the



As individuals we are never complete. There is always room for self-improvement.

world. G-d left work undone so that man can complete the task.

The Midrash Tanchuma (Tazria 5) cites a famous dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Turnus Rufus. Turnus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva the following question: if G-d desires man to be circumcised, why did He not create man circumcised? In response Rabbi Akiva explained that G-d gave man *mitzvot* in order to refine them. G-d created wheat, but man takes it and turns it into bread. So too, we perform the act of circumcision to symbolize our hand in perfecting ourselves and the world around us.

The Meshech Chochma explains the *mitzva* of *tzizit* in a similar manner. We are commanded to wear a four cornered

garment with "fringes" or strings on each side. These fringes are to remind us that in the four corners of the world we will find G-d's work to be completed by us. We need to close the "**loose ends**" and perfect ourselves and our environment.

As individuals we are never complete. There is always room for self-improvement. In addition, it is our duty to help make this world a better place. Both with respect to how people interact with each other and how we relate to the natural resources surrounding us. We are prohibited from wasting those resources (*ba'al tashit*).

When wearing *tzizit* and holding onto our fringes, it is as if we are holding onto the **lifeline** that Hashem is throwing our way, to enable us to get close to Hashem and to survive and thrive in this world. As we adorn ourselves with *tzizit*, may we internalize this message and act as true partners with Hashem in perfecting His creations.

The Power of Prayer



Michal Horowitz
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In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Shelach*, we learn of the tragic Cheit Ha'Meraglim – the sin of the spies who went to scout out the Land of Israel. After walking the breadth and depth of the Land, the spies returned to the Israelite encampment with a negative report about the Land. It is a Land that consumes its inhabitants! Amalek dwells in the south! There are giants in the Land! The fruits are enormous! The Canaanites dwell along the sea and the Jordan River! We were like grasshoppers in our eyes and so we were in their eyes! We cannot possibly ascend! (Num.13).

As a result of their report, the nation panicked en masse, and the *pasuk* tells us: “and the entire assembly lifted up, and they gave forth their voice, and the nation cried on that night” (14:1).

On this verse, Chazal teach us the tragic consequences, and inter-generation reverberation, of this crying:

And it is written: “And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried and the people wept that night” (Numbers 14:1). Rabba said that Rabbi Yochanan said: That night was the night of the Ninth of Av. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: You wept needlessly that night, and I will therefore establish for you a weeping for generations (Taanis 29a).

Since that very first Tisha B'Av, the 9th of Av has become a day of great calamity, weeping, exile and mourning for our nation. Once the nation rejected the Land, our fate was sealed, and in the future, the Land would reject us, R”L.

It is compelling to note that of all the spies and the entire nation that mourned over how ‘terrible’ (*kevi-yachol!*) the Land of Israel was, there were two scouts who maintained their faith in the Land, their faith in G-d and their faith in themselves. Unlike

those who said, “we cannot ascend!” these spies offered a different report: “כי-יכול נוכל, לה” (13:30) and “הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר עֲבַרְנוּ בָּהּ לְתוֹר אֶתֶּה—” (14:7). the Land is very, very good!” (14:7).

These two scouts were Calev ben Yefuneh from the tribe of Yehuda (13:6) and Hoshea bin Nun from the tribe of Ephraim (13:8). What saved these scouts from joining their comrades in the evil report? What gave them the *kochos* and *emunah* to say that the Land was very, very good and conquering it was possible?

The *pasuk* tells us: *And Moshe called Hoshea bin Nun “Yehoshua”*. (13:16). Why did Moshe change his name, and what does the extra ‘*yud*’ symbolize? Answers Rashi (ibid): Moshe *davened* for him: May G-d save you from the plot of the spies. Hence, the added ‘*yud*’ symbolizes *Shem Hashem* and Divine protection that was granted to Yehoshua. As for Calev, when the scouts arrived in the Land, he took a detour and went to the Me'aaras Ha'Machpela to pray for himself by the graves of our *Avos* and *Imahos*, that he should not be involved in the wicked plot of the spies (13:22 w/ Rashi).

In both cases, these two men had prayers offered, and it was these very *tefillos* that saved them from the slanderous, evil reports of their fellow spies.

The question is: Why did the two scouts specifically need prayers on their behalf, more than any of the other men?

Rabbi Zev Leff *shlita* (of Moshav Mattityahu) explains as follows: Yehoshua came from the tribe of Ephraim, whose father was Yosef. When Yosef was a lad of seventeen, he saw his brothers involved in questionable behavior, doing things he did not understand, and the *pasuk* tells

us: וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת-דִּבְתֵּם רָעָה, אֶל-אֲבִיָּהֶם – And Yosef brought slanderous reports about them to their father (Yaakov) (Bereishis 37:2). Hence, Yehoshua, a descendant of Yosef, from the tribe of Ephraim, had a “spiritual DNA” that was prone to speaking slander and negative reports.

As for Calev, from the tribe of Yehuda, he too had a “spiritual DNA” that lent itself to twisting the facts in order to deceive others. When the brothers threw Yosef into the pit, and sold him to the passing Midianites, it was Yehuda's idea to do so. R' Zev Leff notes that it was Yehuda, leading the way, who came home with Yosef's torn cloak, which had been dipped in goats blood, and said to father, “הֲפָרָא, הַכֶּתֶם בְּנֵי הָאֵם—” (37:32).

While Yosef spoke outright *lashon harah* about his brothers, Yehuda spoke words of deceit and deception to trick and mislead his father. It was these very traits that Moshe Rabbeinu knew lay dormant within the spiritual DNA of Yehoshua and Calev, respectively, and so it was these two scouts who needed *tefillos* to spiritually fortify them against failure.

We see from here the tremendous power of prayer. While Yehoshua and Calev should have been the first to sin, once they were fortified with *tefilos*, they were the only two who stood up and declared: טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ, מְאֹד מְאֹד – the Land is very very good!

We learn from here a very important lesson. No matter what one's “natural” tendencies are, nor one's negative “inherited traits”, nor one's evil inclination to sin... with much prayer, combined with much effort and hard work, one's actions, thoughts and speech can always be channeled for good and utilized positively in one's *avodas Hashem*.

‘Meraglim’ or Fact Finding Mission?



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Although this event is commonly known as “Chet HaMeraglim” – the sin of the spies – in Parshat Shlach they are never referred to as such!

Tourists or Spies

In describing the mission of the *meraglim*, the Torah uses the verb “*la’tur*” (see 13:2,17 and 25, among others). This verb can be translated as ‘to tour’ or ‘to scout.’ However, to arrive at a more precise definition, we must analyze the specifics of that mission. Let’s take a closer look at the instructions that Moshe gives them:

“And you shall see the land,
what it–

Are the people who live in it strong or
weak, few or many?

Is the Land good or bad?

Are the towns open or fortified?

Is the soil rich or poor? Are there trees?
[If so,] bring back samples of the fruit...”
(13:17-20)

Clearly, this is more than a spy mission. Note that the *meraglim* are sent to gather two types of information:

- 1) Information concerning the nature of the land, i.e. whether the Land is good or bad, the soil rich or poor, the trees fruitful, etc.
- 2) Information concerning the feasibility of military conquest, i.e. if the enemy is strong or weak, if the cities are fortified or open, etc.

This is not a job for military spies! This is a fact finding mission. Let’s explain.

Normally, spies are sent only after a nation has decided to engage in war. The military commander sends a small number of spies to help plan how to attack



It would be better defined as a National Commission of Inquiry, engaged to conduct a feasibility study vis a vis the establishment of Eretz Canaan as the new national homeland for Bnei Yisrael.

the enemy. The mission of the *meraglim* is quite different. They are gathering information to help the nation decide if they should conquer the Land. Clearly, this is not a mission for military spies. It would be better defined as a National Commission of Inquiry, engaged to conduct a feasibility study vis a vis the establishment of *Eretz Canaan* as the new national homeland for *Bnei Yisrael*.

To understand why, we must recall that *Bnei Yisrael* are in search of a homeland, to set up a nation for over two million individuals. [Extrapolate the census figure of 600,000 – men above 20 – to arrive at this approximation.]

Therefore, before *Bnei Yisrael* begin their conquest of the land they must verify two important points, corresponding to their double mission (as explained above):

- 1) Whether this Land is indeed suitable for them to set up a homeland. Then, if so,
- 2) Whether it is feasible for them to conquer it.

Based on this introduction, we can better understand the opening *pasuk* of the Parsha: “And G-d spoke to Moshe... send one man from every tribe, each one a chieftain among them... all the men being leaders of *Bnei Yisrael*.” (13:1-3) Due to the nature of this mission, it is necessary to

send a senior representative from each “*shevet*” (tribe).

This also explains why the *meraglim* report back not only to Moshe, but also to the entire public (see 13:26). Had they been military spies, they would report only to Moshe (i.e. the military commander), but definitely not to the entire nation! Furthermore, had they been military spies, there would be no reason to publicize their names, and certainly no reason to send tribal leaders. Quite the opposite! It is because they comprise a national fact finding mission that specifically national leaders are sent, and precisely for this reason, they report back to the entire nation (see 13:26).

A Proof From Sefer Yehoshua

To clarify this distinction between ‘spies’ and a ‘commission of inquiry’ it is helpful to compare these *meraglim* to the *meraglim* sent by Yehoshua [see this week’s Haftarah]:

“And Yehoshua bin Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim saying: Go scout out the land and the area of Yericho...” (Yehoshua 2:1)

“And the two men returned... and they came to Yehoshua and they told him concerning what happened to them.” (2:23)

Note that in Sefer Yehoshua the spies are actually referred to as *meraglim*. These *meraglim* (we are not told their names) are sent secretly to spy out the city and report back only to Yehoshua. Clearly, their mission is purely military.

Yehoshua’s *meraglim* serve as military spies sent by Yehoshua to help him plan how to conquer Yericho. Moshe’s *meraglim* serve as an inquiry commission, sent to help the people determine if they should conquer the Land.

The Unsung Heroes



Rabbi Eli Mansour

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The Midrash comments, “There is nothing more beloved before the Almighty than *Sheluheh Misva*, and there were no *Sheluheh Misva* like those two men sent by Yehoshua Bin Nun.”

The Sages here extol the virtues of “*Sheluheh Misva*” – people who are sent on a mission involving a *Misva* – and in searching for models of “*Sheluheh Misva*,” they point specifically to the two spies sent by Yehoshua before *Beneh Yisrael* entered the land, about whom we read in the *Haftara* for Parashat Shelach. What specific quality of *Sheluheh Misva* is so admirable and worthy of praise, and why are Yehoshua’s two spies – whom Hazal identify as Kaleb and Pinhas – seen as the quintessential “*Sheluheh Misva*”?

The Shaareh Ora (by Rav Meir Bergman, contemporary) explains that “*Sheluheh Misva*” are generally the people who do the hard work without receiving credit or notoriety. For example, when we honor a person who “built” an institution, we generally refer to the primary donor, or the person who spearheaded or raised funds for the project. The laborers on the ground who laid the cement and placed the bricks are not the ones who receive the credit, even though they exerted far greater effort and toil to bring the project to fruition. The ultimate “*Sheluheh Misva*” are the people who devote themselves arduously to a *Misva* without seeking

recognition or fame, who work purely “*Le’Shem Shamayim*,” sincerely for the sake of G-d, without anticipating fame or notoriety.

The models of this kind of “*Sheluheh Misva*” are Kaleb and Pinhas, two accomplished, distinguished men who were sent by Yehoshua, who was considerably younger than them, on a risky, clandestine mission that involved no honor or prestige. In fact, the text in Sefer Yehoshua does not even mention their names; we have to open up the Gemara to find out who they were. Kaleb and Pinhas thus exemplify the “*Shaliah Misva*,” the unsung hero, the one who embarks on a difficult *Misva* with complete sincerity, without seeking fame and recognition.

Any American who lived during the Persian Gulf War of 1991 and would be asked to name the general who ran the war would, in an instant, mention the name of Norman Schwarzkopf, the U.S. Army commander at the time. However, an article published many years later noted that Schwarzkopf was not the only hero of the Gulf War. Schwarzkopf devised the military strategy of the war, which was certainly no easy feat and is deserving of praise, but this was not the most difficult challenge of the campaign. There was somebody else, whose name is not even known, who worked as the army’s logistician during the war. He was the one who had to figure out how to get the

many thousands of troops to where they needed to go, how to make sure they all had proper food and other provisions, and that the day-to-day needs of all personnel were met. This was an enormous undertaking, and one which did not come with any fame or distinction. Schwarzkopf received wide acclaim for his effective work, but the nameless logistician did not – even though his work was certainly no less important or difficult.

There are numerous groups of “unsung heroes” among *Am Yisrael*, those who toil laboriously and quietly to continue our Torah tradition but without receiving much honor or fame. The most notable of these groups, perhaps, is the women. The role of Orthodox Jewish women, by and large, revolves mainly around the home, as they are the ones who tend to the household and raise the children, imbuing within them a love for Torah and our traditions. Most women do not receive any public accolades for their work, despite the fact that they devote themselves tirelessly to the needs of the home and their job is at least as vital – and likely far more vital – than that of their husbands. The Jewish women are the unsung heroes, the Pinhas and Kaleb of *Am Yisrael*, the ones who undertake great challenges for the sake of the nation without seeking recognition, working purely “*Le’Shem Shamayim*,” for the sake of G-d, Torah and the Jewish people.

The Joy of Torah and Eretz Yisroel



Rabbi Moshe Weinberger
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The commentators explain a variety of reasons why Moshe consented to send the spies to *Eretz Yisroel*. There was no doubt that Hashem would fulfill his promise to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov to give their descendants the land. In addition, there was no doubt that the land was good, a land “flowing with milk and honey” (Shmos 3:8). So why did Moshe agree to send the spies?

The Ramban (on Bamidbar 13:2) explains Moshe’s consent in a beautiful way: “Because Moshe knew that [the land] was rich and good..., he told them to pay attention so that they would know this, in order that they tell the nation [so that the nation would] rejoice and be reenergized to ascend [to Eretz Yisroel] with joy.”

This is somewhat difficult to understand. We know that there is a general principle that one should perform all *mitzvos* with joy, as the pasuk (Tehillim 100:2) says, “Serve Hashem with joy...” But this refers to a general state of spiritual happiness that one is fulfilling Hashem’s command. This is a value common to all *mitzvos* that should accompany the performance of any *mitzvah*. But with regard to *particular mitzvos*, their purpose is not to give us physical enjoyment, as the Gemara (see, e.g., Eruvin 31a) says, “*mitzvos* were not given for physical enjoyment.” Physical enjoyment from *mitzvos* would make them “not for the sake of Heaven.”

In contrast, with respect to the *mitzvah* to live in *Eretz Yisroel*, the Ramban teaches us that that Moshe specifically wanted the Jewish people to know that the land was

“rich and good” so that they would rejoice and feel great happiness while living in *Eretz Yisroel*. It seems that Moshe did not only want them to feel a spiritual enjoyment in knowing that they were fulfilling one of Hashem’s *mitzvos*. He wanted them to feel a *geshmak*, a sense of pleasure, from living in the land of Israel.

This is why Hashem told us that *Eretz Yisroel* is “a good and expansive land... a land flowing with milk and honey” (Shmos 3:8). It is why Moshe told the spies (Bamidbar 13:20), “Strengthen yourselves and take from the fruit of the land.” He wanted them to see the *geshmak* of living in *Eretz Yisroel*. This is why, when Hashem first spoke to Avraham to command him to go to the land of Israel, He told him (Rashi on Bereishis 12:1) “Go for your good and for your pleasure.”

The unique nature of the *mitzvah* to enjoy living in *Eretz Yisroel* is also reflected in the Rambam’s statement (Hilchos Melachim 5:10) that, “The greatest scholars would kiss the borders of *Eretz Yisroel*, kiss its stones, and roll around in its dirt...” Living in *Eretz Yisroel* must be incredibly enjoyable!

There is another *mitzvah* that is also an exception to the general principle that “*mitzvos* were not given for physical enjoyment.” And that is the *mitzvah* to study Torah. In this regard, the Taz writes (Yoreh Deah 221:43) that if, for example, Reuven vows that Shimon may not derive any benefit from him [Reuven], then Shimon may not study Torah from Reuven’s *sefer*. He explains that this is because “the Torah certainly gladdens the heart... Therefore

this *mitzvah* [to study Torah] is not comparable to other *mitzvos* with regard to which we say that they are not given for physical enjoyment. In contrast, this [*mitzvah* to study Torah] brings a person enjoyment.” Because it offers tangible enjoyment, Shimon may not study from Reuven’s *sefer*.

In order to counteract the erroneous notion maintained by some that Torah study is only for the sake of Heaven if one does *not* enjoy it, the Avnei Nezer writes in the introduction to his *sefer* Eglei Tal that the primary fulfillment of the *mitzvah* to study Torah is to enjoy one’s learning and that this is the only way that the words of Torah will “become absorbed into the blood... This is what it means to study Torah for the sake of Heaven. It is entirely holy because even the enjoyment itself is a *mitzvah*.” According to the Avnei Nezer, enjoying one’s learning is the primary way one must fulfill the *mitzvah* of studying Torah!

The common denominator in these two *mitzvos* is that neither are circumscribed activities done for the sake of the performance of an obligatory act. Both are much more. They are life itself. With respect to Torah, we say (Maariv), “For they [the words of Torah] are our life and the length of our days.” Without Torah, we are like fish on dry land. The Torah is the wedding ring, the bond connecting the Jewish people and G-d. Can one imagine if a *chossan* told his *kallah* under the Chupah, “Just so you know, even though I’m marrying you, it’s nothing personal. I’m doing this because it’s a *mitzvah*. Sure, I’ll be happy, just like there is a *mitzvah* to

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The Jewish Identity Crisis



Rabbi YY Jacobson
TheYeshiva.net

The first generation of Jews who left Egypt lived in a transcendental oasis. Encompassed by heavenly clouds, nourished with food from heaven, learning Divine wisdom from Moses, the greatest teacher of all time, and witnessing miracles on a daily basis transformed their lives into a veritable paradise on earth.

What would be their situation in the land? They would have to fight wars, plough the land, plant seed, gather harvests, create and sustain an army, an economy and a welfare system. They would have to do what every other nation does: live in the real world of empirical space. What then would happen to their relationship with G-d? Yes, He would still be present in the rain that made crops grow, in the blessings of field and town, and in the Temple in Jerusalem that they would visit three times a year, but not visibly, intimately, miraculously, as He was in the desert. This is what the spies feared. Their underlying problem with the land, as the spies expressed in dramatic prose, was that “it is a land that consumes its inhabitants.” The stress of physical life and running a country will destroy our spiritual creativity and numb our souls.

Now we can well understand the spies’ argument that “We cannot go up against these people, for they are mightier than He,” notwithstanding all the miracles they experienced. We cannot have it both ways, argued the spies. Either we are to be a spiritual people engaged exclusively in spiritual pursuits and sustained by supernatural means, or else we are to enter the natural world of the farmer, merchant, and soldier and become subject to its laws.

The spies argued that if G-d wishes for us to live a spiritual life, then, certainly, He can sustain us with miracles as He has in the past. But if His desire is that we

abandon our supra-natural existence to enter the land and assume a life inside the constraints of nature, then He Himself essentially has decreed that natural law will govern our fate. In that case, they argued, He cannot empower us to miraculously conquer the land, since were He to do so, this would defeat the entire purpose of entering the “land.” Nature dictates that we will not be able to defeat the thirty-one mini Empires that dominate the land. So, the spies concluded, “they are mightier than He;” even G-d cannot help us if He Himself has chosen to transform us from celestial nomads into a materially structured nation.

The confusion of the spies is at the heart of a struggle confronting the Jewish psyche for close to 4,000 years to this very day. Who are we and what is our role in the world is? Should we be insular or integrated? Parochial or universal? Ought we to live in our own orbit or are we part of the family of nations? Are we the Chosen People, or are we just another “normal” ethnic tribe? Who is the Jew—a fragment of eternity or a contemporary people?

This is also a personal question. We enjoy the pleasures of money, sexuality, food, fame, sport, leisure, music, art, literacy and knowledge, as any good gentile. Yet when we define ourselves purely in physical terms, we experience an illogical emptiness. Even if we convince ourselves that we are part and parcel of ordinary society, non-Jews often remind us that there is something “different” about the Jew.

One cannot begin to answer the question of Jewish identity if one is not comfortable with the notion of paradox. Which as we know today defines the core of our universe.

The first generation of Israelites who left Egypt could understand the Jew as a creature of heaven or as a creature of earth. He is either living in a space of miracles or in the real world governed by hard core nature.

But the objective of Judaism is to serve as a link that interlaces heaven and earth. The Jew was chosen to become the bridge between the spiritual and the mundane, between soul and body, and between G-d and money. His/her role is to become a rope that links the holy to the unholy; that transforms the unholy into holy. Heaven is not our destination and earth is not our prison. We are here to reveal the undefined unity that integrates them.

The entire role of the Jew is to imbue our plowing, sowing and commerce with a holy and G-dly purpose; to create a land that is holy, to make the ordinary extraordinary. In Judaism, the conflict between religion sciences is superficial. Science, the laws of nature, are also Divine. All of the cosmos is a mirror of Divine unity.

This was the message of Joshua and Caleb, the two faithful spies who believed that the Jews would be triumphant in their attempt to settle their land. They could not discuss the miraculous past of the people, for the spies were exploring the natural future of the same people. What Joshua and Caleb said was, “If G-d desires us, He will bring us to this Land and give it to us... But do not rebel against G-d! Fear not the people of the Land, for they are our bread... G-d is with us; do not fear them.” In other words, though G-d desires from us to become part of the natural world while employing natural means for our survival, let us remember that if we follow G-d’s course, He will allow His supernatural light to flow through the natural channels of politics, economics and military prowess.

Shelach: A Land that ‘Pickles’



Rabbi Judah Mischel

Executive Director, Camp HASC; Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

Rav Yerucham Levovitz, the legendary *mashgiach* of the Mir Yeshiva was a unique scion of the Mussar tradition of deep self-analysis, inner work and moral refinement. A close disciple of both the Alter of Slabodka, Reb Nossan Tzvi Finkel, as well as the Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv, the Alter of Kelm, he embodied the essence of Mussar. R' Yerucham was renowned for his *shmuessen*, lectures which expressed his awe-inspiring intensity for spiritual elevation. Over four generations, hundreds of talmidim received guidance under the personal supervision of “the Mashgiach”. Many of these, in turn, became leaders and builders of Torah study across the globe.

One of Reb Yerucham’s great *talmidim* was Rav Mottel Rabinowitz, zt”l. After escaping with refugees from the Mir Yeshiva, and reaching Shanghai, Rav Mottel was imprisoned for more than three years in Japanese internment camp while attempting to make his way to the United States, braving disease and near starvation with *mesirus nefesh*. Ultimately, Reb Mottel dedicated himself to rebuilding Torah and passing on the *mesorah* at Yeshivas Mercaz haTorah in Montreal, and became a beloved *rebbe* and role model for an entire generation of *bnei Torah*.

More than two decades ago, Rav Moshe Weinberger, shlit’a, met Reb Mottel, one of the last living great *alter Mirrers*, a title given to a person who had studied in the old Mir Yeshiva in Poland. Rav Weinberger asked the elderly *talmid chacham*: “Can you please share something about learning with Reb Yerucham? A *ma’aseh*, a story, maybe?”

Reb Mottel demurred. “I’m not a chasid,” he said, “I don’t tell stories.” After a few silent moments, however, the elderly disciple of Reb Yerucham spoke: “Did you

ever see how pickles are made? Cucumbers are placed into a jar filled with water and brine, and after some time...they become pickled! I don’t know how, but after being in the presence of the Mashgiach, after a certain amount of time, I could not look at the world the same way. Something took place, like we were sealed in a jar and pickled. After that, no matter what, we can’t be the same way we were before...”



(The *Meraglim*, the ‘spies’ who were sent by Moshe to scout out Eretz Yisrael,) spread an evil report about the land which they had scouted, telling Bnei Yisrael, “The land we passed through to explore is a *land that consumes its inhabitants*, and all the people we saw in it are men of stature!” (13:32)

Chazal understood that wherever the spies passed, the Canaanites were preoccupied with burials and mourning, and “Hashem intended this for good, so that the Canaanites would not notice the *meraglim*.” (*Sotah*, 35a)

Instead of recognizing, appreciating and reporting on this miraculous Divine kindness, the *meraglim* implied negativity and fear, saying that “the land devours its residents.” This *dibat haAretz* became the root cause of tremendous long-standing troubles for the whole nation.

Rebbe Nachman (*Likutei Moharan*, 129) explains the inner-working of “A land that consumes its inhabitants”....

The nature of eating is that the nourishment is transformed into the nourished. For example, if an animal consumes vegetation, such as grass, the grass, when it enters its stomach, they are transformed into the animal. The same applies from animal to human being; when a human consumes an animal, the animal is transformed into a human.

Moreover, wherever the food that is divided among the limbs enters, it is literally transformed into the substance of that limb. For example, the part of the food that enters the brain is transformed into brain, and that which enters the heart is transformed into heart. The same is true of the other limbs.

And this is the meaning of “A land that consumes its inhabitants”. “Land” corresponds to faith, as it is written (Psalms, 37:3), “Dwell in the Land and cultivate faith.”

And this is the implication in “consumes its inhabitants” — for when one enters the Land, which is the concept of faith, he is consumed by it — i.e., he is transformed into its substance.

Rebbe Nachman explains that this transformation takes place through cleaving to a righteous person — being in the close presence of *tzadik* and believing in their power. One is ‘pickled’ in the *tzadik’s* presence, ‘consumed’ and transformed into their substance.

When we eat, the food nourishes us and is transformed and elevated, absorbed into the cells, blood, sinew and bones of our bodies, literally becoming part of us. In this way, Eretz Yisrael is “a land that eats its inhabitants”. When a Jew comes to this “good Land”, we are devoured by its goodness, transformed, elevated and subsumed into its holy atmosphere.

Our physical presence and connection to the Land ‘nourishes’ *Artzeinu haKedoshah*, satisfying its hunger for us, and as a miracle of Divine kindness, we reach higher and higher states of actualization and faith. We are not just affected and shaped by our surroundings; on some level we become them. This is why, when we “go up” to the Land, something takes place in its presence, and “no matter what, we can’t be the same way we were before...”

Towering Tree

Mrs. Shira Smiles

International lecturer and curriculum developer

In anticipation of entering *Eretz Yisrael*, Moshe sends spies to reconnoiter the land. He gives them specific instructions what to look for concluding with, “*Hayesh boh eitz im ayin/Is there a tree within it or not,*” before instructing them to bring back some of the fruit. Then the Torah adds that it was the season when the grapes ripened. If the spies are to bring back fruit, certainly there must be trees in the land? Oddly, are the spies to look for a single tree or is this a collective noun? What does all this have to do with the ripening of the grapes?

Rav Hirsch zt”l says that Moshe was instructing them to see if there were forests, seen as a collective for building and manufacturing, as well as individual trees. Or perhaps as the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh suggests, to see if every species of tree is in the land, as it is a land with everything in it. Or perhaps, as the Torat Moshe says, the Canaanites were so fearful of the upcoming invasion that they cut down all their trees lest the enemy benefit from the fruit. If so, *Bnei Yisroel* need not fear, for they would easily conquer the land.

The Ozhorov Rebbe zt”l posits that perhaps it must be a spiritual rather than a physical question. The Rebbe suggests, based on Rashi, that the “tree” refers to a righteous man whose merit will protect the land. If there were to be one righteous person in the land, writes the Birkat Mordechai, then no strategy nor merit could grant them victory. Rabbi Schwab zt”l cites the Gemara Yerushalmi that Iyov



Can we relate to Hashem only when He reveals Himself to us, or can we relate to Him even when He is concealed in the natural world?

who lived in the days of Moshe resided in Utz, alluded to in the phrase, “Is there an *eitz/tree*.” If the Utz man, is still alive, his merit may protect the inhabitants from harm just as a tree offers protective shade to those in its vicinity.

According to the Satmar Rebbe, Moshe was instructing the spies to look not only if there was a *tzadik* in the land, but also if there were pockets of his righteous students, symbolic fruit of the tree who were influenced by that righteous person. One can determine the true nature of a man by the character of the students he produces.

Oznayim Latorah tells us that the season of the ripening of the grapes refers to a season for partying. Iyov’s children would go out partying every night, and each day, Iyov would offer a sacrifice to Hashem and pray for their atonement. He was the “tree” that protected his children. Each of us also has the ability to be a tree and pray for others. Was Iyov alive whose merit could protect others? The Ohel Moshe citing the Zohar adds, was there someone who while living in the physical

world could elevate it? If the spies themselves would have been worthy, writes the Chidushei Harim, these grapes could have been elevated to inaugurate the bringing of *bikurim*/first fruits offering.

The Tallelei Chaim points out that by seeing what the spies brought back and what their report would be, Moshe would be able to determine if *Bnei Yisroel* were ready to live in the natural world after living in the spiritual bubble of the desert where all their needs were met. When Moshe asked the spies if there was a tree there, he really wanted to know if they would find the *eitz hachaim*/Tree of Life in the land. Would they be able to find G-d in the concealment of the physical world. He asks, “*Hayesh boh eitz im ayin/Is there a tree within it or not.*” After *Bnei Yisroel* had left Egypt, they asked, “*Hayesh Hashem bekirbeinu im ayin/Is Hashem within us or not.*” The two questions are really one: Can we relate to Hashem only when He reveals Himself to us, or can we relate to Him even when He is concealed in the natural world. That first question brought the attack from Amalek; the wrong answer here led to forty years of wandering in the desert.

It is sometimes difficult to recognize Hashem’s presence in the world around us, but if we persist, Hashem will help us find and connect with Him. Each of us has the ability to be a tree, strong in our own right and capable of influencing others.

A Few Words



Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi
Popular Torah teacher and author

What bothered the spies that they “sullied” the name of the Promised Land?!

We have become accustomed to interpretations according to which they were full of fear, misinterpreting reality, etc. But the Sages also insisted on another fundamental interpretation: they, too, have no idea why the Land of Israel was sullied. “In the future, all the animals will gather around the serpent and ask it, ‘Serpent, what pleasure do you have?’ Eventually all the animals will bite to eat, but the serpent – only bites! And it will answer them, ‘And what advantage has he who has a tongue?’” In other words, the serpent asked the animals to ask those who cast aspersions, “What will this do for you?” If they have an answer, the serpent will say, “I will also have an answer.”

We are only slandering. Because we know that not only will we gain nothing, but we will lose so much! And we sulk. For no reason at all. But the Sages did not want to smear ten leaders of the people of Israel just like that. They insisted that this story

is not in vain, “cries in vain”, and therefore they loaded it with meanings, so that even if the spies “only” spoke, we can at least draw a lesson from all this.

Why do we slander?

In his bestseller “The Four Agreements,” Don Miguel Ruiz writes that people who have great fear belittle the object of their fear, speak badly about him, and thus feel “greater” than him and safe. According to Ruiz, they do not understand that bad talk about someone is toxic talk that reflects on the person himself or, as the wonderful “Sfat Emet” would say, “Things that come from the heart go to the heart.” The heart pumps blood into the body and then gets it back! Just so, the “conversations” that come from the heart return to the heart and poison it.

What is to be done? Kalev ben Yefuna taught a wonderful art: against the number of bad words we said, we will say exactly the same number of good words that will “purify” the poison. So when the spies said, “A land that devours its inhabitants,” Kalev said the same number of

alternative words, “The land is very, very good.” Kalev destroyed the people. These words are not a direct response to fear, but a moment of miraculous purification suddenly fills the void.

“No yeshiva wants me!” A young man says with infinite sorrow, “My son, get up, get up! You can, you can!” How often our words, as parents in front of a broken child, seem to us empty words, words that do not reach him, “just” words. There are no words for nothing, says the Torah this week. Words can heal as much as they can poison. “I hate you,” the teenager says, “I love you,” we reply to her.

“These are just words, mother,” she will say. “Words are not in vain,” we reply.

How many words of hate have been said in Israeli society in the last year! Let us count them, let us answer them! And just when it seems that all words are just words, let us just say words of love that seem to have nothing to do with us. Come and clean the air in the land of Israel.

Continued from page 19

do any of Hashem’s *mitzvos* with joy. But it has nothing to do with you. I do not enjoy you personally in any way.” What kind of marriage would that be!? Hashem expects us to enjoy Torah, to have a *geshmak* in our learning. That is the essence of our relationship with G-d.

And it is the same with the *mitzvah* to live in *Eretz Yisroel*. Living there is not simply

the ability to have a land of our own, a refuge from persecution, or even a place to unify us as a nation. The land of Israel is intertwined with the essence of our lives as Jews. As the pasuk (Tehillim 116:9) says, “I will walk before Hashem in the land of life.” The life of the Jewish people and *Eretz Yisroel* are inseparable. They are one life. One essence.

And the connection between them and the reality that both are the essence of our lives is reflected in the *pasuk* (Devarim 32:47), “For it [the study of Torah] is your life and through it you will lengthen your days upon the land which you are crossing over the Jordan to possess it.”

Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin

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Author of the forthcoming book *Kohelet: A Map to Eden* (Maggid)

In Parshat Shelach, we read the brief story of the “wood gatherer,” the מְקַשֵּׁשׁ עֵצִים:

וַיִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ מִקְשֵׁשׁ עֵצִים בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת:

“Once, when the Israelites were in the wilderness, they came upon a man gathering wood on the sabbath day.” (Bamidbar 15:32)

We find the root קש meaning “to gather” in an earlier description of the Israelite slaves:

וַיִּפְּץ הָעַם בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְקַשֵּׁשׁ קֶשׂ לַתָּבָר:

“Then the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.” (Shemot 5:12)

In this verse, in addition to the verb קש, we have the noun קַש translated here as “stubble,” which refers to the cut stalks

of grain left after the grain is harvested. In other contexts, קַש can refer to chaff or straw itself (which is rendered as תָּבָר in the verse in Shemot).

Clearly there is a connection between קַש and קש. Apparently, the verb קש first meant to gather קַש – straw or stubble – and then was expanded to include gathering other similar items like wood.

But going back even earlier, the root קש had another meaning: “to dry up.” This led to the word קַש, which meant “dried stalks of grain.”

From the same root, some linguists claim that we get the word קָשִׁישׁ – “elderly.” They see the development as progressing from “dry up” to “wither, fade,” to “grow old.”

Other scholars disagree. They suggest that the word קָשִׁישׁ comes from the root קשה – “hard.” So instead of an elderly person being like someone who has withered and faded, the קָשִׁישׁ has been hardened, and strengthened, by the challenges of life.

Support for this can be found in Shabbat 53a, where it says that animals can go out into the public domain on Shabbat with “splints” – קָשִׁישִׁין. These splints were meant to straighten the fracture, to make it stiff – קָשָה.

While both theories are convincing, it’s certainly a more encouraging view to consider the elderly as being “strengthened” as opposed to “withering away.”

Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh

Mizrachi Melbourne

We appear in the Parsha 4 times.

Three of those times we are next to each other.

Once only we are separated.

Who are we?

Answer to the Parsha Riddle

The Amalekites and the Canaanites



DUST AND stars

THIS WEEK in Jewish History

- June 10, 1648:** 60,000 Jews of Niemirow, Poland, were murdered in the Chmielnicki massacres. For Polish Jewry, this was a day of fasting and mourning.
- June 11, 1948:** Lt. General David (Micky) Marcus, the American war hero who came to Israel to serve as military advisor, was accidentally killed by a Jewish sentry.
- Sivan 23, 2963 (797 BCE):** King Yerovam ben Nevat prevented the Jews of the Northern Kingdom from bringing their first fruits to Jerusalem.
- June 13, 1967:** At a special ceremony, the Israeli flag was again raised at the Hadassah Hospital on Mt. Scopus after a 19 year absence enforced by the UN.
- June 14, 1940:** The Auschwitz concentration camp was opened. 2.5 million Jews were exterminated there and another half million died of disease and starvation.
- Sivan 26, Year Unknown:** Yahrzeit of Rabbi Yonaton ben Uziel, student of Hillel and translator of the Bible into Aramaic. His tomb in Amuka is now a place of pilgrimage.
- Sivan 27, Year Unknown:** Rabbi Chananya ben Teradyon, one of the Ten Martyrs, was burned at the stake after the Romans discovered him teaching Torah.

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Bayit Knesset Shalem Al Shabazi

UNITED KINGDOM

Mizrachi UK

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Kol Hatorah Kulah
National Council of Young Israel
RZA-Mizrachi USA

CALIFORNIA

Beth Jacob Congregation
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy
West Coast Torah Center
Young Israel of North Beverly Hills
YULA High School
Young Israel of Century City

COLORADO

DAT Minyan
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue
The Denver Kehillah

CONNECTICUT

Beth David Synagogue
Congregation Agudath Sholom
Young Israel of West Hartford

FLORIDA

Beth Israel Congregation
Hebrew Academy RASG
PlayHard PrayHard
Congregation Torah Ohr
Sha'arei Bina Torah Academy for Girls
Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale

GEORGIA

Congregation Beth Jacob
Congregation Ohr HaTorah

HAWAII

Kehilat Olam Ejad Ganim

ILLINOIS

Mizrachi-Religious Zionists of Chicago

MARYLAND

Kemp Mill Synagogue
Pikesville Jewish Congregation
Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation

MASSACHUSETTS

Congregation Beth El Atereth Israel

Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe
Congregation Shaarei Tefillah
Young Israel of Brookline

MICHIGAN

Young Israel of Oak Park
Young Israel of Southfield
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe

MINNESOTA

Congregation Darchei Noam

MISSOURI

Yeshivat Kadimah High School Nusach
Hari B'nai Zion Congregation
Young Israel of St. Louis

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Hillel at Dartmouth

NEW JERSEY

Ahavas Achim
Volunteer Chaplain Middlesex County
Congregation AABJ&D
Congregation Adath Israel of the JEC
National Council of Young Israel
Congregation Ahavat Achim
Congregation Ahavath Torah
Congregation Brothers of Israel
Congregation Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn
Congregation Etz Chaim of Livingston
Congregation Israel of Springfield
Congregation Ohr Torah
Congregation Sons of Israel of Cherry Hill
Kehilat Keshet
Ma Tov Day Camp
Ohav Emeth
Pal Foundation
Shomrei Torah of Fair Lawn
Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center
Yavneh Academy
National Council of Young Israel
Young Israel of Teaneck

NEW YORK

Beis Community
Congregation Anshei Shalom
Congregation B'nai Tzedek
Congregation Bais Tefilah of Woodmere
Congregation Beth Sholom
Ramaz
Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls
MTA – Yeshiva University High School for Boys
Young Israel of Merrick
Congregation Beth Torah
Congregation Etz Chaim of Kew Gardens Hills
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun
Congregation Ohab Zedek
Great Neck Synagogue
Iranian Jewish Center/Beth
Hadassah Synagogue
Irving Place Minyan

Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach
Kehilath Jershurun
Kingsway Jewish Center
Lincoln Square Synagogue
Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park
North Shore Hebrew Academy
Young Israel of Merrick
NYC Department of Correction
OU-JLIC at Binghamton University
OU-JLIC at Cornell University
Queens Jewish Center
Stars of Israel Academy
The Jewish Center
The Riverdale Minyan
Vaad of Chevra Kadisha
West Side institutional Synagogue
Yeshiva University High School for Girls
Young Israel of Hillcrest
Young Israel of Jamaica Estates
Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst
Young Israel of New Rochelle
Young Israel of North Woodmere
Young Israel of Oceanside
Young Israel of Scarsdale
Young Israel of Woodmere

OHIO

Beachwood Kehilla
Congregation Sha'arei Torah
Congregation Torat Emet
Green Road Synagogue
Fuchs Mizrachi School
Heights Jewish Center

PENNSYLVANIA

Shaare Torah Congregation

SOUTH CAROLINA

Brith Sholom Beth Israel
Congregation Dor Tikvah

TENNESSEE

Baron Hirsch Congregation

TEXAS

Mayerland Minyan Synagogue
Robert M. Beren Academy
United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston

VIRGINIA

Keneseth Beth Israel

WASHINGTON

Bikur Cholim-Machzikay Hadath
Northwest Yeshiva High School
Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation

URUGUAY

Comunidad Yavne Uruguay

VENEZUELA

CARACAS
Ashkenazi Kehilla
Mizrachi Venezuela



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