

Parshat Shelach (5781): Detect the Defect
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וַיַּעֲלוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד־חֶבְרוֹן וְשָׁם אַחִימָן שֵׁשַׁי וְתַלְמִי יְלִידֵי הָעֵגְלָק וְחֶבְרוֹן שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים נִבְנְתָה לְפָנָי צֶעַן מִצְרַיִם (שלה
יג:כב)

The Meraglim went up in the Negev and he came to Chevron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of the Anak lived. And Chevron was founded seven years before Tzoan of Egypt (Bamidbar 13:22).

This posuk begins using the lashon of they, and then switches to the singular tense, "And *he* came to Chevron."

The Gemara in *Sota* gives over a teaching from Rava -- when the posuk in Bamidbar 13:22 uses the singular tense, it is specifically referring to Calev, one of the *Meraglim*. Calev separated himself from the influence of the other spies, and so we are also told that Calev had a different spirit.

Rashi comments on this posuk and bases his commentary on the former Gemara in *Sota*. -- Calev alone went to Chevron, where he prostrated himself on the gravesites of our Avot in Maarat Hamachpela, *davening* that he wouldn't be affected by the rest of the cohort of the *Meraglim*.

Rav Soloveitchik notes that eleven of the *Meraglim* did not care to enter Chevron, the place where our forefathers are buried! Only Calev traveled there! The remaining eleven *Meraglim* did not understand the *Seugla* of the Land and of the People. According to Chazal, Chevron was not the most beautiful part of the Land of Israel, and thus it was befitting to have such a place for the location of burial grounds; so, Avraham Avinu chose it for the location of the Avot's cemetery. But we call Israel the Holy Land! It's not just the Land Flowing with Milk and Honey, it's a Holy Land, ארצנו הקדושה. One of the most unique sights in the land of Israel is Chevron, because our Avot and Imahot chose to be buried there as a testament throughout all of history to our ownership and our linkage to the land -- beginning from Avraham and Sarah, continuing through our times today! The Jew yearns to be buried in the land of his forefathers. Our heritage to this Holy Land is found in the *Kever Avot*, in the *Ir Avot* of Chevron!

When Calev realized that the rest of the *Meraglim* did not include visiting Maarat Hamachpela in their itinerary, he detected the defection in this markedly divergent group of people. Calev recognized that their goal was different from his own; Calev wanted to fulfill what Hashem wanted. Therefore, Calev feared the forthcoming report of the *Meraglim* -- would they only see what was on the surface and look for defects and faults, or would they follow in the ways of Calev by declaring that "This Land is my Land," the Land of Bounty, the Land of Holiness, the Land of Our Fathers?

אָרֶץ אַבֹּת, we will conquer and resettle the Land of Our Forefathers, Amen!