



1. Rashi on Numbers 15:2

(א) כי תבאו. בשר להם שיכנסו לארץ:

(1) WHEN YE ARE COME [INTO THE LAND] — He brought them the good tidings that they would enter the land.

2. Tur HaAroch, Numbers 15:2:1

(א) כי תבואו אל ארץ. כ' הרמב"ן אחר שהבטיח הבני' בביאת הארץ השלים תורת הקרבנות והשלים עוד תורת הכהנים וצוה על החלה שלא נהגה במדבר. ור' אברהם כתב נסמכה זאת הפרשה בעבור שנחלשו ונתאבלו לנחם הבנים ולהודיעם כי יבואו אל הארץ. והנכון בעבור שנשאו קול כל העדה וחטאו ונסלח להם בעבור תפלת משה אמר כי תשגו וגו' ואמר ונסלח להם והוצרך להזכיר משפט מנחת כל עולה וזבח ובסוף והנפש אשר תעשה ביד רמה רמז למעשיהם והזכיר דבר המקושש שעש' ביד רמה ומרוב חמלת השם על ישראל שם ...

(1) Nachmanides writes that after *Hasbem* had reassured the children of the generation who had experienced the Exodus that they, at any rate would inherit the Promised Land, the Torah completes the legislation about offerings and commands regarding Challah that was not obligatory in the desert. Ibn Ezra writes that the reason why these paragraphs were appended at this juncture was to cheer up the younger generation who had to face the premature death of their parents as a result of the debacle with the spies. The Torah reassured them that they, at any rate, would come to the Holy Land, and legislation at this time applicable only in the Holy Land, would lift their spirits. I believe (Ibn Ezra continuing) that more is involved here. On the one hand, this sin -as opposed to the golden calf where only a small percentage of Jews actually took active part, -had involved the entire people, and they had been saved from immediate death only by Moses prayer. It was appropriate therefore to write legislation dealing with both inadvertent sin, (compare verse 22) and to provide a mechanism for obtaining forgiveness. (Verse 25) At the same time, the Torah added technical details about offering gift-offerings, מנחות which henceforth were to be added to all burnt offerings and meat-offerings. In addition the Torah spelled out what would happen if the sin were to be committed deliberately.

3. Tur HaAroch, Numbers 15:22:1 (note trans. from Sefaria, with the elaborations there)

כתב הרמב"ן... ולפי משמעות פשט הפסוק שאומר ולא תעשו את כל המצות ולא אמר אחת מכל מצות כמו שאמר בפרשת ויקרא היה נראה שמדבר במשומד לכל התורה בשוגג כגון ביחיד תינוק שנשבה לבין הגוים ובציבור גם כן שיחשוב שכבר עבר זמן התורה שלא היתה לדורות או ששכחו התורה וע"כ אמרו רבותינו דאיירי בשוגג בע"ז דחשיב ככופר בכל התורה כולה. ובאתה זו הפרשה להשלים בתורת כהנים דין שגגת ע"ז כי הספר הזה משלים דין הקרבנות. ונכתבה בזה המקום שהם מרו דבר השם ואמרו נתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה בלא תורה ומצות ולכך סמכה לכאן:

Nachmanides: According to the plain meaning of the text, the scenario of which the Torah speaks here is, in the case of an individual, someone who was raised amongst gentiles, unaware of the Torah and its laws. When he becomes aware of his error, he is obliged to offer one single such sacrifice in respect of all the previous violations. In the case of the whole people having erred, the scenario would be that they considered that the laws of the Torah are not applicable for all times, and they had believed that the applicability of the law in question had already expired. According to our sages, the subject is violation of the laws of idolatry and it is written here as the Torah (the Book of numbers) concludes the legislation of different kinds of offerings for different reasons. The fact that it has been written specifically here is due to the people now having committed acts of rebellion against G'd as described when they wanted to appoint alternate leaders who would lead them back to Egypt.

4. Daat Zkenim on Numbers 15:2:1

למה נסמכה פרשה זו לפרשת מרגלים לפי כששמעו ישראל גזרתו של הקב"ה אמרו אוי לנו לעולם לא נכנס לארץ כי לסוף ארבעים שנה נמי אם אנו חוטאים יגזור גזרה אחרת וא"כ אין לדבר סוף אמר להם הקב"ה בודאי לאחר מ' שנה תבואו אל הארץ:

Why is the juxtaposed to the story of the Spies? When the Jews heard G-d's decree, they said "woe to us that we will not enter the Land. At the end of the 40 years if we sin, G-d will issue another decree. There will be no end!" G-d said to them that after 40 years they were certainly enter the land.

5. Chizkuni, Numbers 15:2:2

(ב) אל ארץ מושבתים אבל במדבר לא תקריבו כי אתם במזיד ואין קרבן כפרה למזיד.

(2) "to the land wherein you will settle;" but while in the desert, these sacrifices are not welcome. These sacrifices are effective only for sins committed inadvertently; you however, have committed the sins fully aware of what you had done.

6. Sforno on Numbers 15

לעשות ריח ניחוח... והקריב המקריב. הנה עד העגל היה הקרבן ריח ניחוח בזולת מנחה ונסכים כענין בהבל ובנח ובאברהם וכענין וישלח את נערי בני ישראל ויעלו עולות ויזבחו זבחים שלמים לה' פרים לא זולת זה ובחטאם בעגל הצריך מנחה ונסכים לעולת התמיד שהיא קרבן צבור ומאז שחטאו במרגלים הצריך מנחה ונסכים להכשיר גם קרבן יחיד:

חלה תרימו תרומה אחר חטא המרגלים הצריך גם החלה למען יהיו ראויים שתחול ברכה בבתיהם ...

וכי תשגו כבר התבאר בקבלה שבשגגת עבודה זרה הכתוב מדבר וזה כי מאחר שנגזר עליהם להפיל זרעם בגויים (תהלים קו, כו) לא היה נמנע שישגו בעבודה זרה בשובם לארצם...

והקריב המקריב, לעשות ריח ניחוח....until the advent of the sin of the golden calf, the expression ריח ניחוח had not surfaced as no libations plus gift offerings had been needed in order to make the offerings truly pleasing in the eyes of the Lord. This is why we do not find such an expression in connection with the offering of Hevel. Neither do we find it in Exodus 24,5 where the burnt offerings and meat offerings offered by the firstborns were described. As of the sin of the golden calf gift offerings and libations were required to make public offerings pleasing to the Lord, i.e. לריח ניחוח. After the sin of the spies even offerings by private individuals had to be accompanied by such libations and gift offerings, מנחה ונסכים, in order to qualify for the expression ריח ניחוח as proving that the offering had pleased the Lord

(20) חלה תרימו תרומה; after the sin of the spies also the tithe (heaving) known as challah became a necessity in order for the individual homes of the Israelites to enjoy G'd's blessing. ...

וכי תשגו, this verse has already been explained by Sifri as speaking of inadvertent commission of the sin of idolatry. Seeing that eventual exile had already been decreed for the descendants of this generation, it would be practically impossible for the exiled Jews not to become guilty of such acts in their host countries from time to time even if they did not intend thereby to violate Torah laws. They would become guilty of such acts even after their return to their homeland, having acquired idolatrous habits while under duress in exile.,...

7. Rabbanit Sharon Rimon

The story of the blasphemer [Vayikra 24] is reminiscent of our story of the gatherer, in many respects:

- a. The text describes the sin of an individual.
- b. The name of the perpetrator is not mentioned.
- c. The sinner is placed in detention because it is not clear what should be done with him; the law requires clarification.
- d. The punishment is the same: stoning by the entire congregation, outside of the camp.
- e. The text describes the execution of the sentence.
- f. Both narratives are located in the midst of a group of mitzvot...

Differences:

- a. While neither perpetrator is mentioned by name, the blasphemer is identified as "the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian man... and his mother's name was Shlomit, daughter of Divri." The stick-gatherer remains completely anonymous.
- b. The sin of the blasphemer is presented clearly, while the sin of the stick-gatherer is not.
- c. The story of the blasphemer focuses on the man himself: He "went out," "they fought," "he blasphemed," "he cursed." In the case of the gatherer, the text focuses on "those who found him".
- d. The blasphemer is brought before Moshe alone, while the gatherer is brought before Aharon and the entire congregation, too.
- e. The language used to describe the clarification of the law is different: the blasphemer is placed in detention "that it be explained to them by G-d's word," while the gatherer is detained "for it had not been explained what should be done with him."
- f. The episode of the blasphemer contains some laws that relate to the story, while after the story of the stick-gatherer there are no related laws...

It seems that the story of the gatherer is not really about the sin of an individual. Rather, it is a story about the Israelites: it is they who are in the wilderness, it is they who find a man transgressing Shabbat, it is they who bring him before the entire congregation (not just before Moshe), waiting to clarify what sort of death sentence applies, and it is they who carry out the sentence.

Rav Shimshon Refa'el Hirsch explains: The opening words, "when the Israelites were in the wilderness," as well as the entire formulation of this story, in comparison with the story of the blasphemer – all this shows that the text is placing a strong emphasis here on the initiative of the people... the actions of the Israelites and their involvement, for the sake of the Torah.

What do we learn about the Israelite congregation from this story? The Midrash (*Sifrei, Bamidbar* 113) offers the following insight:

"They found a man gathering sticks" – this tells us that Moshe had appointed watchmen, and they found him gathering.

"And those who found him gathering sticks brought him" – why is this repeated? Is it not already written that "they found a man"? What new information is added by the words, "those who found him brought him"? This tells us that they had warned him to desist from his forbidden labor.

From the verses describing the discovery of this man, the Sages deduce that it is not by chance that they find him: there are watchmen, and these watchmen not only "catch" the transgressor, but also try to prevent him from sinning and warn him. The message, in short, is that there is an attempt on the part of Moshe (and the nation) to prevent sin.

Thus, *Parashat Shelach* describes spiritual progress. The Jewish nation, described in the story of the Spies as a congregation of sinners and violators of G-d's word, is revealed in the narrative of the stick-gatherer as a community seeking to observe and fulfill G-d's word. For this congregation, it is important that every individual behaves in accordance with G-d's commandments.