

Points to Ponder
Shelach 5776

Send people for you (13:2) – Why not send people for me? The Gemara (Sotah 34b) notes that Hashem did not want to send the spies. **Rav Schachter Shlita quoted Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** who noted that in Chumash Devarim they were referred to as Miraglim but here only as Anashim. The difference is that the idea of sending the Miraglim was not to spy out the land out but rather to check it out like a person on a date. In Chumash Devarim it became apparent that even as they left they had already decided that they were going to come back with a negative report. Thus, there they, are already referred to as Meraglim.

And you will be strengthened and will take from the fruit of the land (13:20) – **Rav Moshe Wolfson Shlita** explained that the spies were going to need strengthening not to be caught up in the corruption and thus he told them to take from the fruit of the land. The reason is simple. By taking of the fruit, the people would be swayed by the purity and truth that they would put in them. Be'er Mayim Chaim adds that through the fruit there is a holiness that adds to the greatness of Hashem that comes from Kedushas HaAretz.

Hashem, slow to anger and full of Chessed (14:18) – When the Miraglim sinned Moshe davened and did not mention the attribute of Emes. **Rav Elyashiv ztl.** explained that the Zohar HaKadosh points out that we cannot mention a Middah of Hashem if we do not use it appropriately. The Miraglim lied – therefore the Middah of Emes was not important to them. Ergo, Moshe left it off his list of middos too.

And my servant Calev since he had a different spirit (14:24) – What kind of different spirit did he have? **Rav Zaidel Epstein ztl.** suggested that it came in the form of Hisbonenus – the ability to consider and recognize that there are challenges that will attempt to thwart a Tzaddik from achieving his destiny. Calev saw this and thus he went to Chevron in order to stay off the attempt to corrupt him by his Yetzer Hara.

Moshe said to them “Why do you violate the word of Hashem, it will not be successful? (14:41) – The entire episode of the Maapilim seems odd in that the people declare that they were wrong for rebelling against Hashem and then immediately – or so it seems – did it again by attacking and forging onward? **Rav Elchanan Samet Shlita** explains that the Maapilim thought that since they had done Teshuvah, it was a test to see if they had truly resolved to enter the land and that Hashem REALLY wanted them to attempt. Their fervor was to be applauded though their attention to detail led to their downfall.

And wine for a libation (15:5) – **Sifre** suggests that the idea of offering libations was obligatory only upon entering Eretz Yisrael where it even applied to the Bamas Yachid. Why? **Rabbi Yaakov Haber Shlita** suggested that the true test of elevating all of creation through all the faculties of Man would only come in the Land of Israel where all the commandments would be placed into action. Consequently, n'sachim – which **Rav Kook ztl.** explains represent the added dimension of sanctification of all aspects of life – only applied to the individual upon entry into the Land wherein man would have the chance to consecrate everything he did for Hashem – both individually and as part of a tzibbur.

And do not be swayed after your hearts and after your eyes (15:39)- **Rav Nachum Percovitz ztl.** wrote in one of his notebooks that the human eye takes pictures at a rapid pace. The heart serves as the photo development center of the human and the brain as the storage and processing unit. That brain works full time and is constantly working. What it works on and whether it will be positive or wasted is

dependent on the person – and dictated by the eye. Thus, it is important that we be careful what we look at in order to protect our greatest investment – ourselves.

Haftorah: And she lowered them by the rope through the window (Yehoshua 2:15) – The Gemara (Zevachim 116b) notes that the rope was used by Rachav's customers to gain access to her home and now it was being used as some sort of Teshuvah – in saving the lives of Calev and Pinchas. The Gemara (Megillah 14b) adds that she later converted, married Yehoshua and became matriarch to 8 future prophets including Yirmiyahu. **Yalkut Shimoni** adds that after being thrown into a pit as punishment, Yirmiyahu was lifted out of the pit by ropes that tore into his skin. When he cried out to Hashem, Hashem reminded him that the rope was good enough for his ancestor, and should be good enough for him too. **Rav Pam ztl.** pointed out that when a person does a Chessed for another, it is crucial that s/he do the Chessed in the best way possible. It needs to be done in a manner that does not imply or create a source of discomfort or embarrassment if the provider had been the recipient.