

Points to Ponder
Shelach 5778

שלח לך אנשים Shelach (13:1) – Rashi notes that the connection between the story of Miriam and that of the Miraglim is to teach us that the Miraglim saw Miriam's punishment and did not take the appropriate Mussar. **Rav Yerucham Levovitz ztl.** asks why Rashi makes this seem like it was the main sin of the Miraglim. Weren't they punished for tarnishing the land of Israel? Rav Yerucham explains that although this was not the main error, in life one needs to learn from previous life experiences and take a personal perspective from it. The Miraglim did not do so and it was no surprise that as a result, they committed an even bigger fail.

Kalev silenced the people (13:30) – Ramban notes that the real reason Moshe agreed to send the Miraglim was that their mission was to figure out HOW to best conquer the land. **Rav Nissan Alpert ztl.** adds that they were not supposed to decide IF they should conquer the land. There was never any doubt about that. When the Miraglim discussed whether they SHOULD and were stirring the nation up, Kalev opened up and tried to shut down that effort. Hence Vayahas – he brought them to their reminder.

ועבדי כלב עקב רוח אחרת בו And my servant Kalev who was of a different spirit (14:24) – Rav Elyashiv ztl. explains that when one is surrounded by a group of like-minded individuals bent on a sinister purpose one needs to not only have a different idea – s/he needs to have a totally different spirit to remain focused on the real truth. Kalev was able to withstand the peer pressure of the Miraglim because he had an entirely different spirit about him and was able to overcome the challenge they presented.

When you eat from the bread of the land separate Terumah (15:19) – Why is it that after the sin of the Miraglim the three immediate Mitzvos that we received were the ones of Challah, Nesachim and Tzitzis? The **Chiddushei Harim** explains that it was a reminder to the three miracles that the Jews got in the Midbar that they did not want to give up – the Manna, Be'er and clouds. **Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl.** added that the reason that Challah is called Terumah to Hashem is that whatever one does, s/he can do it L'Shem Shomayim – even the eating is in of itself a means to raise oneself to Hashem.

A Terumah for Hashem (15:19) – Rav Schachter Shlita noted that the Torah notes 4 different things referred to as Terumah: 1) Challah 2) Fruit in Eretz Yisrael 3) Terumas Maaser 4) Bikkurim. Why does this matter? Rav Schachter explained that these Issurim are Mitztaref together because of the title Terumah. He added that there seems to be a requirement upon separation of the Challah to declare Terumah L'Hashem. If so why do we not do so today? The **Malbim** explains that since we make a Beracha on the Challah there is no need to separately recite the name of Hashem on the Challah – it is covered by the Beracha.

כי לא פרש מה יעשה לו For it wasn't clear what should be done to him (15:34) – How could they not know what to do with him? At the very least they should have known of the fact that he deserved the death penalty based on the Possuk of הרע מקרבך. **Rav Dovid Kav ztl.** explained that the Torah is teaching us an important idea here – that one who does an Avaira with good intentions cannot easily be called הרע. For when a Jew acts based on intentions that are purely לשם שמים, one cannot say it is רע. It could lead to being punished – and it was – but the action is not intended as Ra.

עֵינֵיכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי לִבְכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם **And you will not be swayed to follow your hearts and your eyes (15:39) – Rav Wolbe ztl.** points out that man is stuck between 2 pulls. One part pulls him toward desire. The other pull is toward Godliness. The dual pulls makes man sway in the balance like a boat on a sea. Herein comes the Mitzva of Tzitzis like an anchor line to keep man on the straight and narrow anchor of the Taryag Mitzvos. The Tzitzis line keeps us from drowning by anchoring us to the actions of the Taryag.

Haftorah: ותורידם בחבל בעד החלון She let them down by a rope through the window since her home was in the wall of the city and in the wall she sat (Yehoshua 2:15)- Yalkut Shimoni (See also Zevachim 116b) notes that Rachav was a prostitute who had served every officer in the army and political leader. When she turned 50, she told Hashem she wanted to do Teshuva and converted to Judaism. She told Hashem that she sinned with three things – the wall, the string and the window and she wanted Hashem to give her a chance to redeem herself for those Aveiros. (Rashi explains that the rope, the window and the wall were the ways that the adulterers were able to sneak into her home and it was this that she was seeking atonement for). **Rav Shimon Schwab ztl.** notes that this seems far-fetched since the real prostitutes do not seem to use ropes since they lack the shame for their business. What then did Rachav mean? Rav Schwab answers that we learn an important principle of Teshuva here – that it begins from the Tzelem Elokim in each person – the part that was not contaminated by sin. That there were people in Canaan who had a bit of Busha and dignity not to openly flaunt their extra-marital affairs and that Rachav was willing to support their Busha served as an opening toward Kedusha from her own Tzelem Elokim and her ultimate Teshuvah.

Questions of the week:

- 1) The Miraglim were referred to as Roshei Bnei Yisrael and in the same breath are also compared in their travel as in their return – both with planning to destroy the status quo. Which was it? Were they Tzaddikim when they left or Reshaim?
- 2) The Torah speaks of the Mekosheis and tells us that he was placed into prison on Shabbos. How was this allowed if the Rema notes that one cannot be imprisoned on Shabbos (See 339:4)?