Points to Ponder

Shelach 5781

**שְׁלַח לְךָ֣  Send for yourself (13:2) - Rashi** explains that that Hashem told him that Hashem was not commanding and demanding Miraglim but that if Moshe wanted, he could send them. **Rav Shlomo of Zvhil** compared this to a person who set up a Shidduch for his daughter and told the son in law not to date too much because it will eventually hurt the Shidduch (See Bamidbar Rabba 16:7). Here too, when you send Miraglim, Hashem said that He was not scared about the trip but that it displayed a lack of faith in the relationship and that even great people fail in their faith in the land of Israel.

**כֻּלָּ֣ם אֲנָשִׁ֔ים רָאשֵׁ֥י בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖לThey were all distinguished men; heads of Bnei Yisrael were they. (13:3)** - So how did leaders make such a colossal error?  **Rav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht ztl.** explained that as leaders, they felt responsibility for the benefit of the people. They were afraid that entering the Land would represent a step down from the spiritual level that they were accustomed to in the desert. From a pragmatic perspective, they were correct that their level of spirituality would go down, but they did not understand that our role in this world is to serve Hashem through the many difficulties that exist in the material world. When it says in the Zohar that they would lose their office, they were not concerned about their personal good, but thought that a change in the way of life would require different leadership. They did not succeed in understanding that G-d wanted them to prepare themselves for a new reality. The reason is that only one who received the necessary preparation needed in the desert, can succeed later in Eretz Yisrael. The proof for this is the success of Yehoshua bin Nun, who became the leader of Am Yisrael when they entered the Land. Each and every generation needs to try to correct the sin of the spies. We live in a difficult time period, with dangers from within and without. We must believe that it is possible to deal with all the challenges, and not run away from them, since Eretz Yisrael is acquired through difficulties. When we approach reality through the Torah and belief, the work becomes much easier. Just as Yehoshua and Calev did not give up, even though they were the minority, and they tried to persuade the rest of the people - we also must go in their footsteps.

**וִֽיהוֹשֻׁ֣עַ בִּן־נ֗וּן וְכָלֵב֙ בֶּן־יְפֻנֶּ֔ה And Yehoshua and Kalev tore their garments (14:6)** - Why doesn’t Yehoshua get rewarded the way that Kalev does? And why doesn’t Kalev get the leadership that Yehosua does? **Rav Elyashiv ztl.** explained that Kalev hid his impressions and thoughts but his intentions were in Sakana so he davened -- himself - away from the danger. Yehoshua used the opportunity to grow in his leadership capacity even while in the Sakana.

**ה אֶ֤רֶךְ אַפַּ֨יִם֙ וְרַב־חֶ֔סֶד Hashem Keil Erech Apayim (14:18)** - How come this time there is no mention of Hashem, Hashem as with Cheit HaEigel**? Or HaChaim** says that here there was no “before the sin” as there was before the Cheit HaEigel since the people had sinned with the Eigel. **Rabbi David Holzer Shlita** added that today we also tend to sin, thinking that we are always “before sin” which is what holds us back from getting involved in Teshuva -- we do not even see previous sin. It is a danger.

**עַד־מָתַ֗י לָֽעֵדָ֤ה הָֽרָעָה֙ הַזֹּ֔את How long for this Eidah? (14:27**) - It is fascinating that the concept of Minyan is derived from this group of 12 Miraglim minus Yehoshua and Kalev. How is it that we utilize the concept of Tzibbur from 10 failing spies is incredible!? **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that  perhaps what the *chachomim* had in mind with this derivation was the following: The Rambam writes that we have *halachos* that are based on the premise that only the Jewish people who live in *Eretz Yisroel* constitute *Klal Yisroel*; all of the millions of Jews who live in *chutz la'aretz* are considered to be *yichidim* - individuals (*Ta'anis* 14B.) (Those who live in *chutz la'aretz* but view *Eretz Yisroel* as their national homeland are also considered, to a lesser degree, part of *Klal Yisroel*.) The din of *kiddush Hashem b'rabim* really should have required the presence of all of *Klal Yisroel*, but, as we said above, we derive from this week's *parsha* that wherever there is a *minyan* of Jews they represent *Klal Yisroel* and the *Shechinah* is present there. Perhaps the *chachomim* could only derive this principle from the *meraglim* since after *yetzias Mitzrayim* they were the only Jews who had stepped foot in *Eretz Yisroel*.

**וַיִּמְצְא֗וּ אִ֛ישׁ מְקשֵׁ֥שׁ עֵצִ֖ים בְּי֥וֹם הַשַּׁבָּֽת They found a man gathering wood on shabbos (15:32)** - The Talmud (Bava Basra 109b) notes that his intentions were noble. Why is he to be treated differently than Yael who got Sachar for her activities with Sisra? **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin ztl**. explains that we could have learned these Hilchos Shabbos without the fireworks or the blaze of glory. The Mikoshesh did not do that and so he pays with his life.

**וְעָשׂ֨וּ לָהֶ֥ם צִיצִ֛ת עַל־כַּנְפֵ֥י בִגְדֵיהֶ֖ם לְדֹֽרֹתָ֑ם They will place Tzitzis on their garments (15:38)** - If Tzitzis are so important that they are compared to all Mitzvos, why is wearing them voluntary? **Rav Asher Weiss Shlita** explained that Tzitzis is an Avdus for as Tosafos (Menachos 43b) explains, the Tzitzis is a Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shomayim coming together with an acceptance of Mitzvos.

Haftara:

**וַתּֽוֹרִדֵ֥ם בַּחֶ֖בֶל בְּעַ֣ד הַֽחַלּ֑וֹן  And she let them down through the cord in the window in the wall (Yehoshua 2:15)** – The Talmud (Zevachim 116b See also Yalkut Shimoni here) notes that Rachav called to Hashem to allow her to atone for the sins of the string, the window and the wall (The men who came to visit her for her services also used the same string, window and wall). It was this call for forgiveness that led to her Teshuva and her reward of 8 Neviim and Kohanim. However, wasn’t the sins of the string, rope and wall the smallest of her sins? What about her lifestyle in general? Why does she focus on these three things**? Rav Shimon Schwab ztl**. learns a VERY valuable lesson from this Chazal – that Teshuva begins from the stirrings in any part of the person that still remains wholesome. While her reputation was known, she still had room to consider the Busha of the Canaanite men who might not visit her through the front door. Other people too, do not become stirred to teshuva by hearing how small and useless we are. They are stirred by the greatness of the Neshama and how these behaviors are not becoming of the Godly souls we possess.