Points to Ponder

Shelach 5782

**שְׁלַח לְךָ֣ Shlach Lecha (13:2) - Rashi** notes that the connection between this section in the Torah and the next one is that the Miraglim saw what happened when Miriam told Lashon Hara and didn’t learn from her punishment**. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz ztl.** explained that one who watches an episode needs to properly assess cause and effect for himself or herself. **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztl.** added that the reason why we often fail to do that is because of our personal component or “ism” that interferes with our vision. The Miraglim didn’t see that they wanted to remain in charge of the people which blocked their ability to properly assess the situation.

**אֶ֣רֶץ אֹכֶ֤לֶת יֽוֹשְׁבֶ֨יהָ֙ הִ֔וא A land which consumes its inhabitants (13:32)-** As the Meraglim traveled through Eretz Yisrael, they saw many cities in tumult over the recent death of their leaders. The Meraglim thus concluded that with so many Canaani officials dying, the land must be unsafe and one which “consumes its inhabitants”. **The Steipler ztl.** notes that if the death of officials was in fact a routine event in Canaan, then the funerals the Meraglim saw would not have served to distract the populace. Rather, they would have been ordinary occasions. If so, why didn’t the Meraglim realize that the abundant funerals were in fact unusual for the populace and in fact not the norm? The Steipler explains that someone who is in a negative state of mind will see things as such. Just as someone who is wearing dirty glasses will see everything as soiled, so too a person's attitude colors his outlook and determines his point of view. Since the Meraglim viewed Eretz Yisrael with suspicion, they understood the numerous deaths they witnessed to reflect negatively on the land. Their negative outlook on Eretz Yisrael distorted the reality of Hashem's intervention and acts of kindness. Conversely as well, being in a positive state of mind leads us to see reality in a more favorable light. The unprecedented circumstances of today leave us with various challenges, yet a positive state of mind enables one to embrace the good and carry on.

**וַנְּהִ֤י בְעֵינֵ֨ינוּ֙ כַּֽחֲגָבִ֔ים And we were like grasshoppers in our eyes and that is the way we were perceived (13:33) - Ba’al HaTurim** quotes a midrash that when the meraglim arrived in Eretz Yisrael, they saw a giant eating a giant pomegranate and then discarding the shell. All twelve mergalim took shelter inside that shell and that is when they felt like grasshoppers. **Rav Dr. Norman Lamm ztl.** interprets this midrash to be saying that the meraglim had the “golus Jew” mentality who were willing to accept an empty hollow shell as long as it was used by the non-Jews. They were willing to lower themselves to feel like grasshoppers simply because the surrounding culture wanted them to feel that way.

**סָ֣ר צִלָּ֧ם מֵֽעֲלֵיהֶ֛ם Their shadow (tzel) has been removed from them (14:9)** - In an explanation of the intent of Yehoshua and Kalev here**, Rav Yosef Carmel Shlita** explained that roots that contain the root-part tzel represents the form in which a matter is seen … and it is similar to ‘their shadow has been removed,’ which means that the images of their faces were changed … due to fear**.” Ibn Ezra** adds that “If a warrior does not have a shield to protect him and be a shadow for him, his heart will be full of fear.” Here too, notes Rav Carmel, the Canaanite nations were so fearful of Bnei Yisrael’s expected arrival that they were ready to throw away their weapons and run for their lives.

**הִנֶּ֗נּוּ וְעָלִ֛ינוּ Here we are and we will go up (14:40)** - After the incident with the meraglim, a group of people called the ma’apilim decide to go to Eretz Yisrael and they are killed. What did they do wrong? Wasn’t their act the greatest form of teshuva — expressing a true desire for Eretz Yisrael**? Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl Shlita** suggested that what they did was an extension of the original cheit. The original cheit was not believing that they could conquer Eretz Yisrael. The teshuva was not that they had the physical means to conquer but that HaShem would help them conquer. They, like the meraglim, took HaShem’s role out of the equation.

**רֵאשִׁית֙ עֲרִסֹ֣תֵכֶ֔ם חַלָּ֖ה תָּרִ֣ימוּ תְרוּמָ֑ה Hafrashas Challah (15:20) - Rav Schachter Shlita** pointed out that there is a disagreement between the Michaber and the Rema as to the proper Beracha that one makes upon the separation of Challah. The **Shulchan Aruch** notes that the proper Beracha is Al Hafrashas Terumah while the **Rema** notes that it is L’Hafrish Challa Min HaIsa. Rav Schachter quoted the Gra who noted that the difference seems to be based on the idea of whether Berachos need to be made in Biblical hebrew or not. Citing Avudraham, who notes that the biblical Challah refers only to raw dough – the Michaber prefers the Beracha of Terumah which would include both baked and raw Challah. Rav Schachter noted that the Netziv disagrees and maintains that the Berachos do not need to be made in biblical hebrew.

**וּרְאִיתֶ֣ם אֹת֗וֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם֙ אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹ֣ת And you shall see it and remember all the Mitzvos of Hashem (15:39)** - The Gemara, Menachos (43b), states that techeiles was chosen because its color is similar to the sea, which is similar to the sky, which is similar to the כסא הכבוד. Why not just state simply that techeiles is similar to the כסא הכבוד? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** suggests that this is to teach us that if we want to get to the כסא הכבוד, we have to do so incrementally. We can’t just jump to the top level.

**Haftara**

**וַתּֽוֹרִדֵ֥ם בַּחֶ֖בֶל בְּעַ֣ד הַֽחַלּ֑וֹן She lowered them down by the rope through the window (Yehoshua 2:15)** - **Yalkut Shimoni** (Yiriyahu 326) notes that when Yirmiyahu was being lifted out of the pit and the rope was cutting into his arms, he davened to Hashem for some relief from the pain of the ropes cutting into him. Hashem told him that Rachav let the Miraglim out with a coarse rope instead of a ladder and it was good enough so too, here it should be good enough for her descendant. **Rav Pam ztl** added that we learn that when one does a chesed for someone else, that Chesed needs to be performed in the best way possible for the recipient not in the way we would benefit from it.