



Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Not What it Seems

Presented by Rabbi Yonatan Zakem
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This week's Parsha, Shelach, contains one of the most well-known episodes in the Torah -- namely, the account of the spies dispatched to scout out the Land of Israel. The Jewish people requested of Moshe that they be allowed to send spies in order to plan their conquest of the land. Moshe, with Hashem's consent, acquiesced to their request, giving them specific instructions of how the mission should be carried out. He directed them regarding how they should approach the land, the route they should take, and a variety of areas to focus their reconnaissance. Are the people strong or weak, few or many? Is the land good or bad? Are the cities open or fortified? The unfortunate conclusion of the expedition was that the spies returned with a negative report, which the people accepted, resulting in the decree that they wander the desert for forty years.

Seemingly, Moshe gave the spies a list of objective metrics to investigate and they brought back an honest report. Why were they faulted for answering Moshe's questions accurately?

A closer look at the language of the Torah can provide us with a possible explanation. While the conventional and straightforward translation of "*hame'at hu im rav*" etc. is "are they few or many," the literal translation is actually "are they few *if they are* many." The challenge given to the spies was a challenge of faith. True, the cities may be fortified and the nations may be great, but they were being challenged to view the land through the lens of the promise that G-d gave our forefathers. They were being asked to see past all of the obstacles and recognize the beauty and promise of the land. The spies, in answering these questions with nothing more than factual observations, failed this test.

Many times in our own lives we are presented with this same test. Circumstances may seem insurmountable and our troubles can become overwhelming. Through all of the difficulties, we must strive to see the loving hand of Hashem in everything presented to us.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

POINT TO PONDER

"How much longer must I endure this evil assembly that provokes to complain against Me?" (14:27)

From where do we know that ten people are necessary for a minyan that is engaged in a holy matter? Rav Chiya bar Abba said, the posuk says, "I shall be sanctified amongst (mitoch) Bnei Yisrael." The amount of people needed to create a group worthy of being called amongst (mitoch) is ten, as the posuk says, "Separate yourselves from amongst (mitoch) the assembly." An assembly is ten people, since Hashem referred to the evil spies as an assembly (twelve minus Yehoshua and Calev). Therefore, a quorum for holy matters requires ten people (Megila 23b).

How can a requirement regarding holy matters be derived from the spies who did not act in a holy matter? In fact, they even denied Hashem's capabilities (Sotah 35a)! This does not seem to be a befitting source for a halacha regarding a holy matter.

PARSHA RIDDLE

What mitzva did all of Bnei Yisrael not fulfill in the desert?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

From where in the parasha can we learn that after one adds the title Rabbi, Rabbi, to his teacher's name that one can refer to him by name?

Answer: Yehoshua said, "My master Moshe." How was he allowed to say his Rabbi's name? Since he added an honorary title, it was permissible (Rav Elchonon Wasserman zt'l).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Shelach contains the great tragedy of the *meraglim* (spies). While there is much debate among the commentators as to the exact nature of the sin committed by the Jewish people, their failing is described in *Tehillim* (106:24) as "[T]hey despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word."

R. Yaakov Emden (*Sidur Beis Yaakov, Sulam Beis E-I, os 6*) makes the passionate exhortation that "every Jew must make an established and fixed resolution in his heart to make *aliyah* and live in *Eretz Yisrael*" (at least insofar as this will be economically viable) and he inveighs that complacency with our Diaspora existence "was the sin of our first ancestors [i.e., the Jewish people in the era of the spies], who caused weeping for [successive] generations, for they despised the pleasant land." He declares that the ceaseless troubles that befall our people in exile are due to our having "totally forgotten about living in *Eretz Yisrael* ... it has seemed to us in our tranquility in *chutz la'aretz* that we have found another *Eretz Yisrael* and *Yerushalayim* like it," and interprets in particular the Alhambra Decree expelling Jews from Spain in 1492 as a consequence of this complacency.

But as R. Emden himself explicitly concedes, historically, most Jews did not make *aliyah*. *Halachic* authorities have offered various rationalizations for this neglect. The consensus is that the imperative does not apply where the journey involves risk to life, such as piracy or shipwreck (see *Tosafos Kesubos* 110b s.v. *Hu Omer; Shut. Rashbash* #1-3). This was often the case in earlier times, although it would not seem to be much of a concern today.

R. Chaim Cohen declares that the *mitzvah* to make *aliyah* does not apply today since we cannot properly perform the agricultural commandments (that apply in *Eretz Yisrael - Tosafos ibid.*). R. Yosef di Trani (*Shut. Maharit YD* #28), however, sharply rejects this idea, insisting that "one who purchases land in *Eretz Yisrael* can fulfill all the positive commandments ... and he can also be careful of the negative commandments, and who will prevent him from doing so?"

Other rationalizations for the historical neglect of *aliyah* are beyond the scope of this column.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I caused joy on Mordechai.
2. Don't use a calzone.
3. You can see my color.
4. I was lost.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am four yet eight.
2. I am knotty.
3. I am wrapped.
4. I equal 613.

Last Week's Answers:

#1 The Menora (My 7 gave you 8; enlightening; the *eigel* and I have something in common; I was Aharon's consolation.)

#2 The Backward Nuns (We each equal 50; we are backwards; we change 5 books into 7; we divide between tragedies.)

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

win super prize

Congratulations to Akiva Kugler

for winning the binoculars in the latest raffle! Stay tuned for the next raffle...

Answer as many as you can.
Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!
Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

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