



# Parshas Shlach

For the week ending 21 Sivan 5756 (28 Sivan 5756)\*  
 7 & 8 June 1996 (14 & 15 June 1996)\*  
 \*Week ending dates for locations outside of Israel

## Summary

**A**t the insistence of the Bnei Yisrael, and with Hashem's permission, Moshe sends twelve scouts, one from each tribe, to investigate Canaan. Anticipating trouble, Moshe changes Hoshea's name to Yehoshua, expressing a prayer that Hashem should not let him fail in his mission. They return 40 days later, carrying unusually large fruit. When ten of the twelve scouts state that the people in Canaan are as formidable as the fruit, the men are discouraged. Calev and Yehoshua, the only two scouts still in favor of the invasion, try to bolster the spirit of the people. The nation, however, decides that the Land is not worth the potentially fatal risks, and instead they demand a return to Egypt! Hashem is 'angered' by this attitude, but is eventually 'placated' by Moshe's fervent prayers. However, He declares that the nation must remain in the desert for 40 years until the men who wept at the false report of the scouts pass away. A remorseful group, regretting their previous mistake, rashly begins an invasion of the Land based on Hashem's original command. Moshe warns them not to proceed, but they fail to heed this warning, and are massacred. Hashem instructs Moshe concerning the offerings that will be made when the Bnei Yisrael will finally enter the Land of Israel. The people are commanded to remove *challah*, a donation for the *Kohanim*, from their dough. The laws for an offering after an inadvertent sin, for an individual person or a group, are explained. However, should someone blaspheme against Hashem and be unrepentant, he will be cut off spiritually from his people. One man is found gathering wood on public property in violation of the laws of Shabbos, and is put to death. The laws of *tzitzis* are taught, and twice a day we recite this section of the Parsha because it reminds us of our Exodus.

## Commentaries

### THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

#### **"The land of Israel is very good." (14:7)**

'I don't know how you *live* in this country! You're living in the Third World! It's dirty and dangerous! It's beyond my comprehension why someone with a decent standard of living would uproot himself and live in a Levantine slum!'

Why is it that to some people the Land of Israel seems so beautiful while others struggle to see its beauty and leave disappointed?

There once was a beautiful princess who had many suitors for her hand in marriage. Obviously she could not marry all of her suitors, and so she devised a plan to select the more promising candidates: When a young man would come to woo her, her servants would usher him into an ante-chamber. On the table in front of him were some fruit and some books of Torah scholarship. The servants told him that the princess would be with him shortly. They bade him to make himself comfortable and to help himself to some fruit. What the suitor did not know was that there was a spy-hole in the wall of the room. Through this, the princess would observe the aspiring husband.

If he took a piece of fruit and made a *bracha* with the proper concentration, or if he took up a book and began to learn intently, then she would emerge in her finest apparel and appeared as a rare beauty.

If, however, the suitor took some fruit and failed to make a *bracha*, or idled his time away and didn't use the opportunity to learn Torah, then she would put on torn rags, blacken her face and teeth and emerge looking like a hag.

Eretz Yisrael is like that princess. If a person comes to the Land looking for spirituality, he will be enchanted even by the *physical* beauty of Eretz Yisrael. On the other hand, if a person is not worthy, everything will seem dirty and dingy.

However, Eretz Yisrael will never embarrass a person. So rather than suffering the embarrassment of being rejected by the Land, Eretz Yisrael allows the person to think that *he* had rejected *her*...

*(Based on The Ramban in a letter to his students)*

### EAR-LENDING OR BENDING?

#### **"And Calev stilled the people towards Moshe and said 'We should certainly go up and possess the Land for we are well able to take it.' (13:30)**

*"Friends Romans and Countrymen, lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar not to praise him..."*

Mark Anthony must have learned a thing or two from (*I'havdil*) Calev in this week's Parsha! Calev knew that after hearing the negative words of the spies, the people were in no mood to hear anything good about Moshe Rabbeinu. And thus, his first words gave the people the impression that he was going to speak against Moshe. It was only once he had gained their attention, that he started to praise Moshe.

If you want someone to listen to you, the worst thing you can do is to start off by saying "You're wrong!" That's a real ear-closer. If you want to get your point across, you must first make sure that the other person *is listening to you*. The nature of a person is that he is more ready to listen to approbation than criticism. To get your point across, start off by agreeing, truthfully, with some aspect of the other person's point of view. After all, not everything he said could have been wrong!

*Continued on reverse*

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel  
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Production Design: Lev Seltzer

Continued from other side

Reb Moshe Leib of Sassov once saw a nobleman riding in a carriage with his wife and children. The carriage was drawn, not by horses, but by an entire Jewish family. To increase their speed, this fiendish nobleman kept lashing them.

Reb Moshe Leib, who had a very distinguished bearing, held up his hand and halted the carriage. He looked inside and saw the nobleman's son. Suddenly, Reb Moshe Leib gathered the child into his arms and began to kiss him, exclaiming what a beautiful child he was! How delicate and sensitive he was! He put the child down and then confided to the nobleman that the cries of the family who were harnessed to his carriage were harming the child's emotional well-being. Reb Moshe Leib advised the nobleman to send the family away. Upon hearing this, the nobleman immediately freed the family...

If you want someone to 'lend me your ears,' you must first find something that their ears will want to 'borrow'!

(Based on Eser Tzichzachus in Rabbi Zelig Pliskin's Growth through Torah)

### PIPES IN TIME

**"And also it is a land flowing with milk and honey." (12:27)**

Eretz Yisrael is the channel through which flows the spiritual current that supports the entire universe. It's a pumping station, funneling spiritual energy to the cosmos. This spiritual pipeline comes down to this world through *Har Habayis*, the Temple Mount, and then radiates out through Eretz Yisrael to the whole cosmos.

*Shlomo Hamelech* (King Solomon), the wisest of all men, had the ability to discern the exact location of these spiritual pipelines as they traversed Eretz Yisrael: He grew flowers in Jerusalem that would normally grow only in Africa, because he knew the exact path of the African flowers' life-force as it made its way to Africa.

Just as Eretz Yisrael is a pipeline in space, so too Shabbos is a spiritual pipeline in time, flowing and distributing spiritual energy to the week. This is hinted to in the words "...flowing with milk and honey" — the ubiquitous description of the Land of Israel. Because if you take the last letters of the words "...flowing with milk and honey" in Hebrew and reverse them, they spell *Shabbos*!

It's interesting to note that Physics also recognizes an exact relation between Space (Eretz Yisrael) and Time (Shabbos). Time is, according to Physics, *the negative signature of Space*.

In other words, Space is the end of Time, backwards (i.e. Shabbos — the last letters of "...flowing with milk and honey" backwards). Just as Time is the negative signature of Space, likewise Shabbos is the 'reverse polarity' of Eretz Yisrael...

## Haftorah: Yehoshua 2:1-24 STREETS OF GOLD

**C**an you imagine what it must be like to look for a new job almost every single week of the year? It's bad enough trying to find and hold down one job, but to have to start again every Monday morning, pounding the tarmac to find yet another way to put bread on the table...

But that is exactly what Jews did in America at the turn of the Century. To escape the pogroms of Czarist Russia, Jews fled to America having heard stories of a *goldeneh medina* — a land where the streets were paved with gold. In a sense that may have been true, but to mine that gold meant working on Shabbos... and that was unthinkable. So, these Jews would get hired on Monday, work until Friday afternoon, not turn up on Shabbos and get fired again on Monday. This happened week after week. It was through this tremendous self-sacrifice that Torah was established in America.

What kept those spiritual heroes, and thus their descendants, connected to *Yiddishkeit* (Judaism) was they never for one moment thought of breaking Shabbos. It never entered their minds for a second. You *had* to keep Shabbos! That was as self-evident as saying you had to breathe!

There is an interesting puzzle in this week's Parsha: Why was it that the Spies that Moshe sent came back with a negative report, while those which Yehoshua sent in this week's Haftorah, came back positive and enthusiastic?

The difference was their attitudes to the mission in the first place: The spies that Moshe sent went with the attitude of *whether* to enter the land, whereas those of Yehoshua had had no question as to whether to enter the land. That was Hashem's will. Not to enter the land was unthinkable. *It never entered their minds for a second*. The only question was *how* enter the land.

When a person starts off with the mind-set that is exclusively positive, his focus will be locked on achieving his objective, because the thought of not doing never enters his mind.

(Based on Rabbi Abraham Twerski)



Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

**Yom Shabbos Kadosh Hu - תו אשׁוּעָה וְצַדִּיק יִצְלָח**

**The Sabbath Day is Holy**

"Women light the Shabbos candles, observe the laws of Niddah (family purity) and properly bake Challos (by tithing a portion of them). Their merit will protect them when the day comes for them to give birth. If they were not negligent in observing these laws the birth will be a quick one."

**נשים נרות תדלקנה  
אז קרובה לדתן**

This is based on a Mishnah (*Shabbos 31b*) familiar to those who recite the chapter of *Bameh Madlikin* in the Sabbath Eve prayer service. It states that women are prone to danger during childbirth for being negligent in the observance of family purity, tithing the challah they bake and lighting Shabbos candles. In this Mishnah the candle-lighting is listed last but in this song of tribute to the Sabbath we mention it first as a merit for a woman to have a safe and swift delivery.

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