

# OHRNET

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PARSHAT SHLACH IS READ ON 21 SIVAN (JUNE 17) IN ISRAEL AND ON 28 SIVAN (JUNE 24) OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### TACTICS AND STRATEGY

*“Send out men for you and they will explore the Land.” (13:2)*

Think of all the things you do between the moment you wake up in the morning and the time your head hits the pillow at night. Think of how many thousands of actions your hands do, your eyes do, your legs do every day. Think of how many words leave your lips, how many sounds enter your ears. Think of how much physical coordination it takes to make a piece of toast in the morning. Take out the bread from the cupboard, open the package with your fingers, pick up the knife, hold the knife so you can cut the bread, switch on the toaster. (“Okay!” I can hear you say, “I know how to make toast!”)

We are all so busy it’s amazing we have any time at all to live.

Life is so full of wonderful, timesaving inventions that make our lives more frenetic than ever: Mobile phones, computers, cars and planes have all “upped the ante” of the demands that we make on ourselves and that others make on us. The fact that more *can* be done leads inexorably to more *having* to be done.

And very often, in the melee of this technological magic, we forget our destination.

One of life’s most important distinctions is between tactics and strategy.

Tactics is about how you get there. Strategy is where you’re going.

The “tactics of life” is about maintaining our bodies, eating, washing and exercising. The “strategy” is about what sort of life I want to live, who do I want my children to be, and what will they say at my funeral. Very few eulogies that I have heard focus on the fact that deceased brushed his

teeth daily.

*“Send out men for you and they will explore the Land.”*

The word that the Torah uses here for “to explore” is *Vayaturu*.

In a very similar context the Torah says, *“All of you approached me and said, ‘Let us send men ahead of us and let them explore the Land...’ (Devarim 1:22)*

In this latter verse, however, the word for “explore” is *Vayachparu*

Why the difference?

In this latter verse the people were asking permission to explore the Land; in the verse in our Parsha, G-d gave His permission.

The word that the Jewish people used for their request, *Vayachparu*, is related to *chafar*, meaning to “dig out”, to “reveal that which is hidden.”

In other words, the people wanted to explore the Land so they could dig out the hidden weakness of the Land, the better to capture it.

They were focusing on tactics.

In our Parsha, however, the root of *Vayaturu* is *tor*, which connotes joining things together into a row; it is also the root of the verb “to sew”. This word implies seeking out positive aspects for a defined purpose. G-d’s command to the Jewish People was to examine the Land and understand how it was strategically suitable for its task as the homeland of a Holy Nation. The tactical aspect of how to uncover the Land’s weaknesses was a subordinate agenda. Part of the spies’ mistake was that their focus was on the negative and the tactical — finding the weaknesses of the Land. Had they focused on their strategic goal and recognized its unique suitability to their goal, they might not have made such a tragic error.

In life, tactics must always be subordinated to strategy.

• Based on Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

At the insistence of *Bnei Yisrael*, and with G-d's permission, Moshe sends 12 scouts, one from each tribe, to investigate Canaan. Anticipating trouble, Moshe changes Hoshea's name to Yehoshua, expressing a prayer that G-d not let him fail in his mission. They return 40 days later, carrying unusually large fruit. When 10 of the 12 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 people's spirit. The nation, however, decides that the Land is not worth the potentially fatal risks, and instead demands a return to Egypt. Moshe's fervent prayers save the nation from Heavenly annihilation. However, G-d declares that they must remain in the desert for 40 years until the men who wept at the scouts' false report pass

away. A remorseful group rashly begins an invasion of the Land based on G-d's original command. Moshe warns them not to proceed, but they ignore this and are massacred by the Amalekites and Canaanites. G-d instructs Moshe concerning the offerings to be made when *Bnei Yisrael* will finally enter the Land. The people are commanded to remove *challa*, a gift for the *kohanim*, from their dough. The laws for an offering after an inadvertent sin, for an individual or a group, are explained. However, should someone blaspheme against G-d 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 Shabbat and he is executed. The laws of *tzitzit* are taught. We recite the section about the *tzitzit* twice a day to remind ourselves of the Exodus.

## ISRAEL Forever

### THE SECRET AGENDA

One of the great mysteries of Jewish history challenges us in this week's Torah portion. On the way to entering the Land promised to the Patriarchs, the Jewish People come to their leader with a request that he send spies to scout the Land for them. A leading member of each tribe is sent on this mission, and ten of them return with a slanderous report to discourage the people from trying to conquer what they describe as the invincible inhabitants of the Land. As a result of the lack of faith in the Divine promise, expressed in their gullibility accepting this slanderous report, the people are condemned to wander in the wilderness for 40 years and to die there.

What was the motive for these spies to malign the Holy Land and discourage the people from inheriting it?

In one of our sacred sources we find the solution to this mystery.

These ten spies were afraid that upon entering the Land there would be a reorganization of tribal leadership that could lead to their losing their positions of authority. Their personal agenda was placed above the national one and brought tragedy upon the people.

This should serve as a powerful lesson for Jewish leaders today to carefully examine themselves to ascertain that their personal agendas do not get in the way of their securing Israel forever.

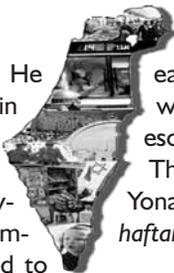
## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE SAGES

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

“LET YOUR YETZER HARA (EVIL INCLINATION) NOT DELUDE YOU THAT THE GRAVE IS A REFUGE, FOR YOU ARE FORMED AND BORN AGAINST YOUR WILL, AND YOU LIVE AND DIE AGAINST YOUR WILL”

— RABBI ELIEZER HAKAPAR (AVOT 4:22)

A person often despairs of changing his ways. He therefore resigns himself to behave in a certain pattern and takes the fatalistic attitude that if Heaven should punish him with death, it will all be over and done with. But this is an error. For whatever G-d expects his soul to accomplish will be accomplished, even if, against its will, his soul is returned to



earth time and time again in order to fulfill its mission. So why suffer the pangs of death and burial if there is no escape from G-d, even in the grave?

This message is also the gist of the story of the Prophet Yonah's failure to escape from G-d, which we read in the *haftara* at Mincha on Yom Kippur.

• *Mishna Berura*, 622, *Sha'ar Hatzion* 6

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why is the portion about the spies written immediately after the portion about Miriam's *tzara'at*?
2. To what was Moshe referring when he asked the spies "Are there trees in the land"?
3. Who built Hebron?
4. Which fruits did the *meraglim* bring back?
5. How many people carried the grape cluster?
6. Why did G-d shorten the *meraglim*'s journey?
7. Why did the *meraglim* begin by saying the Land is "flowing with milk and honey"?
8. Why did the *meraglim* list Amalek first among the hostile nations they encountered?
9. How did Calev quiet the people?
10. Why did the Land appear to "eat its inhabitants"?
11. Besides the incident of the *meraglim*, what other sin led to the decree of 40 years in the desert?
12. On what day did *Bnei Yisrael* cry due to the *meraglim*'s report? How did this affect future generations?
13. "Don't fear the people of the land...their defense is departed." (14:9) Who was their chief "defender"?
14. Calev and Yehoshua praised Eretz Canaan and tried to assure the people that they could be victorious. How did the people respond?
15. "How long shall I bear this evil congregation?" G-d is referring to the 10 *meraglim* who slandered the Land. What halacha do we learn from this verse?
16. How is the *mitzvah* of *challa* different from other *mitzvot* associated with Eretz Yisrael?
17. What is the minimum amount of *challa* to be given to a *kohen* according to Torah Law? Rabbinic Law?
18. Verse 15:22 refers to what sin? How does the text indicate this?
19. Moshe's doubt regarding the punishment of the *mekoshesh etzim* (wood-gatherer) was different than his doubt regarding the punishment of the blasphemer. How did it differ?
20. How do the *tzitzit* remind us of the 613 commandments?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 13:2 - To show the evil of the *meraglim* (spies), that they saw Miriam punished for *lashon hara* (negative speech) yet failed to take a lesson from it.
2. 13:20 - Were there any righteous people in the land whose merit would "shade" the Canaanites from attack?
3. 13:22 - Cham.
4. 13:23 - A cluster of grapes, a pomegranate and a fig.
5. 13:23 - Eight.
6. 13:25 - G-d knew the Jews would sin and be punished with a year's wandering for each day of the spies' mission. So He shortened the journey to soften the decree.
7. 13:27 - Any lie which doesn't start with an element of truth won't be believed. Therefore, they began their false report with a true statement.
8. 13:29 - To frighten the Jews. The Jewish People were afraid of Amalek, because Amalek had once attacked them.
9. 13:30 - He fooled them by shouting, "Is this all that the son of Amram did to us?" The people quieted themselves to hear what disparaging thing Calev wished to say about the "son of Amram" (Moshe).
10. 13:32 - G-d caused many deaths among the Canaanites so they would be preoccupied with burying their dead and not notice the *meraglim*.
11. 13:33 - The golden calf.
12. 14:1 - The 9th of Av (Tisha B'av). This date therefore became a day of crying for all future generations: Both Temples were destroyed on this date.
13. 14:9 - Iyov.
14. 14:10 - They wanted to stone them.
15. 14:27 - That ten men are considered a congregation.
16. 15:18 - The obligation to observe other *mitzvot* associated with *Eretz Yisrael* began only after the possession and division of the Land. The *mitzvah* of *challa* was obligatory immediately upon entering the Land.
17. 15:20 - No fixed amount is stated by the Torah. Rabbinic Law requires a household to give 1/24 and a baker to give 1/48.
18. 15:22 - Idolatry. "All these commandments" means one transgression which is equal to transgressing all the commandments - i.e., idolatry.
19. 15:34 - Moshe knew that the *mekoshesh etzim* was liable for the death penalty, but not which specific means of death. Regarding the blasphemer, Moshe didn't know if he was liable for the death penalty.
20. 15:39 - The numerical value of the word *tzitzit* is 600. *Tzitzit* have eight threads and five knots. Add these numbers and you get 613.

- The pressure exerted by new government officials and its impact on the bakers
- The short-lived careers of *kohanim gedolim* in Second *Beit Hamikdash*
- Why the Shiloh Sanctuary and the First and Second *Beit Hamikdash* were destroyed
- Comparing the First *Beit Hamikdash* period with that of the Second
- The past and future of nations, particularly Persia and Rome
- A *mezuzah* for the quarters of the *kohen gadol* and for a *succa*
- Which buildings and which entrances require a *mezuzah*
- To which houses do the laws of *nigei batim* (house leprosy) apply
- Was Yerushalayim the property of one tribe or of all
- Initiating the substitute *kohen gadol* when he takes over on Yom Kippur
- The *avneit* (belt of material) of the *kohen gadol* and the regular *kohen*
- The fate of the sacred garments worn by the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur
- The status of the substitute *kohen gadol* after the first is reinstated
- Comparative probability of death and ritual contamination of *kohen gadol*
- The problem of assuring that the *kohen gadol* has a wife on Yom Kippur and only one
- The ability of a *kohen gadol* to perform service on the day a close relative dies
- The activity of the *kohen gadol* during seven-day separation and throughout the year
- The impact of the Red Heifer purification waters on the one who touches or carries them, and upon the one who applies them and the one upon whom they are applied
- Which came first – the incense offering or the fixing of the Menorah lamps
- The application to the altar of the blood of the daily communal *olah* sacrifice

## HONOR, BEAUTY AND AGE

The sacred garments worn by the *kohanim* for the performance of their priestly duties in the *Beit Hamikdash* had to reflect the “honor and beauty” (*Shmot* 28:2) for which they were intended. Garments that were tattered or stained were therefore disqualified.

What about garments that were whole and clean but worn from usage? In line with the general rule of “no room for practicing poverty in a place of wealth,” which is applied to many aspects of the House of G-d, there would be room to consider that new garments should be made every year to replace the old ones. The Sage Rebbie, however, saw in a seemingly superfluous word in the Torah a message that worn garments retain their sacred status.

In the chapter dealing with the daily ritual of tithing the ashes on the altar, the Torah commands the *kohen* performing this rite “that he shall put on his linen garments, and his linen breeches shall he put on his flesh” (*Vayikra*

6:3). The repetition of the word *yilbash* (shall put on) after already writing *velovash* (that he shall put on) led several Sages to reach different conclusions as to what message was being relayed by this apparent redundancy.

Rabbi Yehuda understood it to signal that even though the Torah explicitly mentions only two of the four priestly garments worn for performance of the ashes rite, all four were actually needed.

Rabbi Dossa interpreted it as a sanction for using the garments worn by the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur for the use of a regular *kohen* throughout the year.

Rebbie rejects this latter approach, and one of his reasons is that it seems improper for garments that were used for the more elevated service of Yom Kippur to be subsequently used for a lesser purpose. His conclusion is that the Torah wished to communicate that there is no need to make new garments each year and that worn ones are fine as long as they are neither tattered nor stained.

• Yoma 12b

## WHAT THE Sages SAY

“Fear of G-d lengthens life, while the years of the wicked are cut short (*Mishlei* 10:27). The First *Beit Hamikdash*, which lasted for 410 years, was spanned by only 18 *kohanim gedolim* while the Second one (in which there were many undeserving *kohanim gedolim* who bought the position from corrupt rulers), more than 300 *kohanim gedolim* served in a 280-year span of its 420-year history. The conclusion is that because of their wickedness they died within the year of their appointment.”

• Rabbi Yochanan - Yoma 9a

“If a *kohen gadol* was replaced because of some temporary disqualification and eventually reinstated, his replacement can no longer serve in a *kohen gadol* capacity, because this would create hard feelings, nor can he serve as a regular *kohen* because this would be a demotion, and the rule is that in matter of holiness one only goes up and never down.”

• Rabbi Yossi - Yoma 12b

## MISPLACED SPIRITUALITY

**From: Karen in WI**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*I am Jewish, but I don't find Judaism to be particularly spiritual. It seems to be so much about laws of do's and don'ts. On the other-hand, eastern religions are so uplifting and really make me feel spiritual. What do you think I should do?*

Dear Karen,

You are right about Judaism being a lot about do's and don'ts. Torah literally means "instruction", and includes much about how to practically live our lives in a way that benefits us and others. In fact, Jewish spirituality is largely based on practically becoming better people, and benefiting others. However, that is not the whole story.

Judaism has a very rich and extensive mystical tradition that addresses all of the facets people find enchanting in eastern religions: meditation, inspiration, dreams, the soul, reincarnation, forces, Divine energy, and much, much more. I can't go into all the details here, for they are fitting for years of study, but you can start by browsing our website **Ohr.edu** for an introduction to many of these topics in Judaism. There are also many good books on this topic that can be found in kosher Jewish bookstores. I suggest starting with the classic, "The Way of G-d" by Rabbi Moshe Luzzatto.

The following story I heard recently seems very apropos:

As is common among Israeli youth after completing army service, a brother and sister went to travel in India. Interested in observing one of the Jewish holidays while away from home, the brother contacted a Jewish organi-

zation there. He enjoyed his experience so much that he started attending classes until he decided to return to Israel to enroll in a yeshiva. In the meantime, his sister became inspired by a charismatic guru who spoke about the cosmic unity of the universe and other tantalizing spiritual ideas. Eventually she returned to Israel for a short visit to the family.

Her brother pleaded and pleaded with her to explore Judaism, until finally, toward the end of her visit, she agreed to attend a lecture on the deeper spiritual side of Judaism. Once there, the organizer apologized that the intended speaker couldn't make it, and announced that he would talk about the laws of returning lost objects instead. The brother couldn't believe it. His sister finally agreed to listen to something that might interest her in Judaism, and now she had to sit through this anything but "tantalizing" topic. He determined that she just must not have the merit of hearing what she needs to hear yet. Uninspired, the sister returned to India and her guru.

After some time, she was walking with him through the market when he happened upon a wallet full of money – and identifying documents. Amazed to see him so contently pocket the wallet, she asked whether he intended to return it to its rightful owner since there was ID in the wallet. The guru launched into a lofty discourse on the universality of energy and how he and the owner really share the same soul divided into separate bodies and that in order to maintain celestial equilibrium and harmony he must keep the wallet for himself.

When she heard this spiritual sanction for stealing she recalled the "boring, irrelevant" lecture that she had "mistakenly" attended with her brother about the Torah's detailed legal requirement to return lost objects. At that moment she decided to pick up a lost Jewish soul she found in India and return it to its Rightful Owner. She took the next plane back to Israel and enlisted in a women's seminary for Jewish learning.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

### A TALE OF TWO CHILDREN

**W**hen the couple came to register their three-year old child in the Talmud Torah in Bnei Brak, the principal noted that they were far more excited than ordinary parents who make a routine application.

"Don't you remember us?" they inquired of the principal as tears streamed down the face of the mother.

When he replied in the negative, they reminded him of what took place four years earlier. Childless for many years they had approached the rav of the Ramat Elchanan community in Bnei Brak, Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, for advice in how to seek Heavenly help. He relayed to them that the Chafetz Chaim had suggested that raising someone else's

child could bring the Heavenly blessing of raising a child of their own. He therefore suggested that they offer to pay the tuition of a child in the local Talmud Torah whose parents couldn't afford to do so and this would be tantamount to raising that child.

They followed this advice and made an arrangement to pay a year's tuition for a poor child in the Talmud Torah they were now visiting. It was in that year that they were blessed with a son. Even though they lived a considerable distance from this particular school, they insisted on registering their son in the school where their miracle began.

## SPEAKING TO THE SPEAKER

**Question:** As one who attends many lectures from Torah personalities, I am often faced with the dilemma of whether to thank the speaker at the conclusion of his talk. What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** You owe a debt of gratitude to the speaker who has made the effort to address your audience, even if he is being compensated for his talk. If you feel that you enjoyed his words and benefited from them, it would be proper for you to compliment him on his success.

What if you have already heard the speaker say the same thing before?

There is a story told about the Ponovezher Rav, Rabbi Yosef Kahaneman, who was a world-renowned orator in addition to his stature as a Torah leader. During a fundraising

visit to the US on behalf of the great yeshiva he founded in Bnei Brak, Rabbi Kahaneman was scheduled to speak on successive nights in two major cities. When he began preparing his second speech, he decided to use the same one that he had so successfully used the night before since this would be an entirely different audience. When he got up to speak, however, he saw a gentleman sitting in the front row who had been in the front row the other night. He quickly improvised a different speech, which, of course, was well received.

At the conclusion of his talk he was greeted by that fellow in the front row who told him: "Rabbi Kahaneman, that was a great talk but not as good as the one you gave last night in the other city. I came all the way here to hear you say it again!"

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