

OHRNET

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IN CHUTZ LA'ARETZ PLEASE SAVE THIS FOR NEXT WEEK

PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Double Bluff

“Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, ‘Send forth men, if you please, and let them spy out the Land of Canaan that I give to the Children of Israel.’” (13:1, 2)

Amateur psychologists are a dangerous breed. The intricacies of assessing motive and counter-motive can often lead to completely wrong conclusions.

In this week’s Torah portion, Hashem tells Moshe that despite His previous promises about the Land of Israel, the Jewish People may, if they choose, send spies to assure themselves that it is a wonderful place.

It has always intrigued me why the people’s desire to check out the Land should not have immediately been the cause of Divine displeasure. It’s a bit like saying, “Okay, Hashem, we know that You’re the Creator of the World and all that, but we just want to take a little peek ourselves to make sure that Your standards are as high as ours.” Maybe by letting them send spies, Hashem wanted the people to understand the challenges of the Land and yet still follow Him. In this way, their entry into the Land would have been on a higher level of trust.

But, clearly, Moshe was hoping that they wouldn’t take him up on the offer. Our Rabbis offer a parable to why Moshe let them explore the Land: Someone wants to buy a donkey, but he tells the seller that he has to give it a ‘test drive.’ The seller says, “Sure!” The buyer says, “Okay... Can I take it up the mountain and into the valley as well?” “Sure! You take it up hill and down dale!” The seller is certain that because he shows total confidence in his animal that the buyer will forgo the test. This is where the amateur psychology comes in: Say the Jewish People to themselves “Aha! He’s only sounding so confident so we won’t check for ourselves. But precisely because he wants us to go, we’re going to go!”

The rabbit warrens of bluff and counter-bluff go very deep. Suspicion never rests from increasingly complex scenarios of betrayal. The only way through life is, “You shall be straight and open with Hashem.” (Devarim 18:13) Follow the way of Hashem whether it leads up the hill or down the dale!

LOVE OF THE LAND

The Jerusalem “Shuk”

Machaneh Yehuda is the name of the largest shuk in Jerusalem. The name conjures up the image of Jerusalem’s massive and colorful outdoor food market, but it is actually the name of one of the city’s oldest Jewish neighborhoods, dating back to 1888. Only a couple of blocks from the modern

downtown area of King George, Jaffa and Ben Yehuda, this neighborhood is also home to the famous Yeshiva Eitz Chaim and the Zoharei Chama compound of synagogues, where non-stop prayer services are available throughout almost the entire day for market stall-keepers, locals, shoppers, and travelers.

TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Shabbat 93-99

With a Little Help

Rav Chisda said, “The person who could do the *melacha* alone, all by himself, is ‘*chayav*’ (obligated to bring a *korban chatat* sin-offering for accidentally transgressing Shabbat according to the Torah).”

It is undisputed halacha that a person who, all by himself, does a *melacha* on Shabbat, forgetting that it is Shabbat or forgetting that this activity is prohibited by the Torah on Shabbat, is obligated to bring a *korban chatat*. But what if he does this *melacha* together with another person? (Think of two people carrying a pot of cholent from home out into a public domain.) In particular, what is the halacha when one person could do the *melacha* by himself and the other person could not? Is anyone *chayav*, and, if so, which one? Rav Chisda says that only the one who could do it alone is *chayav*. The other party, although he appears to be helping, is halachically considered insignificant and irrelevant since he could not do it by himself.

Rav Ashi brings a support to Rav Chisda from a *beraita* involving a *kohen* doing *avodah* (service) in the Beit Hamikdash while standing with one foot on the floor and his other foot on an object. The *beraita* teaches a case where the object is removed from under his foot while he is doing *avodah*. *Avodah* requires that the *kohen*

be standing. The *beraita* teaches that the *avodah* is valid if the *kohen* would remain standing on his other foot alone and properly perform the act of *avodah*. Therefore, we see that his foot that is on the object is considered insignificant and irrelevant, and the *kohen* is considered to be halachically standing on the floor of the Beit Hamikdash.

This *sugya* is the source of a practical and important daily halacha in how to stand in prayer. It would seem from here that if one leans on an object (such as a *shtender*) during the *shemoneh esrei* prayer, he is considered standing – and there is no problem – if he would remain standing even if the support was removed. However, since one should pray with great awe in front of Hashem, many halachic authorities prohibit even minor leaning except in a special case of need. (See *Mishneh Berurah* 94:22 and *Aruch Hashulchan* 94.)

• *Shabbat 93a-b*

The Accusation Boomerang

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said, “One who makes an accusation of wrongdoing about a person or people who are ‘kosher’ will receive a bodily punishment from Above.”

Our *gemara* explains the source for this teaching: When Moshe wrongly suspected the people of not believing that G-d had sent him in order to free them from slavery, he was immediately punished by Hashem with *tzara'at* covering his hand.

I've heard from rabbis over the years regarding the importance of contemplating and internalizing the seriousness of one's words in accusing another person, even when the accusation seems justified. Before speaking, the accuser should be absolutely certain that

he is following to the letter the detailed laws of *shemirat halashon*. Rebuking a wrongdoer is a mitzvah called “*tochacha*.” But when the rebuking words are inappropriate, the speaker may very well be transgressing numerous Torah prohibitions. And if that doesn't stop him, perhaps the thought of suffering from pain or disease from Above as punishment for this impropriety might.

• *Shabbat 97a*

Q & A

Questions

1. Why is the portion about the *meraglim* written immediately after the portion about Miriam's *tzara'at*?
2. To what was Moshe referring when he asked the *meraglim* "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?

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

Answers

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 *challah* 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.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Kneading the Dough

The mitzvah of *Challah* mandates that one give to a *kohen* a special tithe from his or her dough. The Bible always uses the Hebrew word *arisah* (Num. 15:20-21, Neh. 10:38, Yechezk. 44:30) for “dough” when referring to this special mitzvah. Another word for “dough” appears five separate times in the Bible: *batzek* (Ex. 12:34; 12:39, Jer. 7:18, Hos. 7:4, II Sam. 13:8). In the Mishna (e.g., in *Challah* 1:5, 2:2), the standard word for “dough” is actually *issah*. In this article we will consider the differences between the three Hebrew words *arisah*, *batzek*, and *issah*, looking into their etymologies for possible insights as to their exact meanings and connotations.

Although Ibn Janach and Radak explain that *arisah* is synonymous with *batzek*, other commentators take a different approach. For example, Rabbeinu Meyuchas bar Eliyahu (who lived in Byzantine Greece, circa. 12th-13th century) writes that *arisah* is another word for *areivah* (“kneading trough”), which served as the surface on which dough was typically kneaded. According to this, *batzek* means “dough,” while *arisah* literally means “the place on which dough was kneaded.” As we shall write below, others explain that *arisah* and *batzek* refer to two separate stages of preparing dough for baking.

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865) explains that the term *batzek* refers specifically to dough that has already been kneaded and worked into one batch – whether it has already begun to “rise” or is on the cusp of “rising.” In a similar sense, he notes, the BET-TZADI-KUF root also refers to something “swollen.” This sense of the word appears in the Bible when relating that throughout their travels in the wilderness, Jews did not suffer from “swollen” (*batzek*) feet (Deut. 8:4, Neh. 15:21).

Interestingly, Rabbi Aharon Marcus (1843-1916) theorizes that all three-letter roots which contain the letters BET and KUF are related to the concept of “breaking through,” regardless of what the third letter is and where it is placed. For example, the word *boker* (“morning”) refers to the initial sunlight that breaks through the night’s darkness; *bezek* (“flash”), *barak* (“lightning” or “luster”), and *bohak* (“glare”) all refer to light which is emitted or “breaks out” of a certain object; *bakesh* (“request”) is a demand that penetrates somebody’s will; *badek* (“check,” “investigate”) breaks into a matter to better clarify it, *bokea/batek* refer to “cutting” or “breaking” something open, and *bakar* (“cattle”) refer to “cowbeasts” whose horns appear to “break through” their head. In that spirit, Rabbi Marcus assumes that *batzek* is also related to this set of words, as the BET-KUF element refers to the cracks that appear in leavening dough that make it look like it is “broken.”

Rabbi Nosson of Rome (1035-1106) writes in *Sefer HaAruch* that the root AYIN-REISH-SIN/SAMECH (from whence *arisah* is ostensibly derived) is an expression of “mixing” or “joining.” Based on that meaning, Rabbi Mecklenburg and Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) explain that *arisah* refers to “dough” as simply a mixture of ingredients that are kneaded together (see Rashi to *Berachot* 37b). Rabbi Mecklenburg adds that *arisah* is related to the word *eres* (“bed”), because just as dough consists of a *mixture* of flour and water, so does a bed’s mattress rest on a *mixture* of interlaced beams or planks. The same idea is offered by Rabbi Mecklenburg’s Yemenite contemporary, Rabbi Yachya ben Shalom Kohen of Sanaa (1787-1867).

Rabbi Yitzchak Ratzabi (a prominent Yemenite rabbi in the Neve Achiezer neighborhood of Bnei Barak) suggests that perhaps it is for this reason that a “betrothed” woman (i.e. one who accepted *Kiddushin*) is called an *arusah*, i.e. because she is now “tied” or “joined” to the man who is going to marry her. He notes that even though the Hebrew word *arusah* is spelled with an ALEPH, not with an AYIN, those two letters can sometimes be interchanged, as seen from the fact that the Arabic cognate of *arus* (“groom”) and *arusah* (“bride”) is spelled with the Arabic equivalent to the Hebrew letter AYIN.

Furthermore, Rabbi Ratzabi suggests that while *arusah* denotes dough whose ingredients had simply been mixed together, *batzek* might refer specifically to dough that had already been kneaded and is now beginning to “rise” or “swell” (as per above). He then proposes that if this is true, then the halacha should be that one ought to take off *Challah* from dough immediately after one finishes kneading it – while it can still be called *arusah* – before it becomes *batzek*.

The Mishnaic word *issah* does not appear anywhere in the Bible in the sense of “dough.” Nevertheless, commentators like Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim (1740-1814), Rabbi Mecklenberg, and Rabbi Marcus understand *issah* to be a cognate of the AYIN-SIN/SAMECH root from which words like “squeeze” (Yechezk. 23:3) and “trample” (Mal. 3:21) in the Bible are derived. By virtue of the fact that it needs to be kneaded, “dough” is also something which is sort of “squeezed” and “trampled.” The Modern Hebrew word *issui* refers to a “massage,” whereby the masseuse “squeezes” and “kneads” her client’s skin. Another derivative of this root is the word *assis* (Joel 4:18, Isa. 49:26, and Song of Songs 8:2) which means “juice” – a substance also associated with “squeezing.” Rabbi Pappenheim and Rabbi Marcus further connect this root to the term *asiyah* (“making,” “creating,” “doing”). In short, these scholars maintain that the word *issah* slightly differs from *arusah* in that it serves as a cognate of the verb of “kneading,” while *arusah* is derived from words related to “mixing” or “joining.”

Rabbi Baruch HaLevi Epstein (1860-1941) offers a controversial theory to account for the difference between the Biblical *arusah* and the Mishnaic *issa*. He suggests that the two words are actually one and the same except that the Biblical word has an extra REISH added to it. The addition of a superfluous REISH within a word serves to enhance the flowery beauty of the language. He explains that this beautification of the language happens in ways that we can no longer understand because, due to our long exiles, we are no longer sensitive to many of the nuances of the Ancient Hebrew Language.

Rabbi Epstein cites Pseudo-Rashi (to I Chron. 18:5) who writes that *Darmesek* and *Damesek* mean the same thing (“Damascus”), just like *Sharvit* and *Shevet* mean the same thing (“stick,” “scepter”). Rabbi Epstein understands that this means that the addition of an extra REISH does not change the meaning of the word, but somehow beautifies the writing style. He adds to these examples a bevy of other instances in which an extra REISH is added to a word that maintains its original meaning. Of significance is his point that this rule applies to Aramaic words like *kursa/kiseh* (“chair”), *markolet/makolet* (“grocery”), and *zutra/zuta* (“small”), as well as to names of people, like the King of Judah Uzziah, who was also called Azariah (see also *Hagahos Rashash* to *Rosh Hashanah* 26a). In short, Rabbi Epstein proposes that *arusah* and *issah* are both derived from the same root, just that the former has an extra REISH added to it.

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COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

Blessing Four: Be a Man

“Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, for not having made me a woman.”

Now that the method that our Sages used when composing “negative blessings” has been established, it needs to be applied one last time to the final blessing in the series of three blessings that follow one after the other within the Morning Blessings. This blessing is possibly the most challenging to explain. Not because of the concept that underlies the blessing itself, but because of the emotive issues that it raises.

“Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, for not having made me a woman.” Why do our Sages use such a seemingly insensitive vernacular? Why did the Sages not compose a blessing that states simply and clearly that I am thankful for having been created as a man? And, how does this blessing fit into the triumvirate of “negative” blessings?

What has become apparent in the two preceding blessings is that making a blessing that reflects directly on my spiritual standing can become a two-edged sword if I am not extremely careful in the way that I act and behave. And that same concept will apply here as well.

Our Sages teach that the spiritual spheres and the physical spheres mirror each other. Each one needs the other in order for us to be able to live balanced lives that reflect both the Divine side of us and the corporeal side. More than that, every single creation has its task in this world and is created specifically to be able to perform its spiritual assignment. Therefore, the undeniable biological differences that exist between men and women are a physical manifestation of the spiritual differences that exist between them. Consequently, just as there are certain things that only men can do, so too there are things that only women can do. And this is applicable in both the physical realms and the spiritual realms.

Our focus in this essay will be to explain the blessing made by men, “for not having made me a woman.” In the next article we will address in greater depth how those differences manifest themselves spiritually with regards to women.

Both women and men are created in the “image of G-d,” and both are placed here in this world to enhance G-d’s majesty in the physical realms – each one according to their Divine specifications. In spiritual terms, how are these differences

expressed? The most obvious way is through the number of commandments that men are expected to keep, as compared to women. Women are exempt from most time-bound positive commandments. This translates into men having considerably more spiritual obligations than women. Why is that? Because men are less innately spiritual than women (this will be expanded upon in the next article), and they require more external commitments to ensure a healthy and continual connection to G-d. Those external commitments are the commandments.

And that leads us into exactly the same problem that was raised with the previous two blessings. Every Jewish man is obligated to thank G-d for the unparalleled opportunity to keep His commandments. And the more commandments I am obligated to keep, the greater is my responsibility to thank Him – and the greater my joy should be at the possibility to do so. If so, it would seem that the most apt blessing to make should be, “Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, for having made me a man.” And yet, as twice before, the Sages chose to use the negative syntax to convey our gratitude and appreciation for being able to live a life that revolves around G-d’s commandments.

The reason for this anomaly is that, once again, there is a dilemma of how to express our gratitude without its being the cause of a “Divine audit.” Just as with the two previous blessings, by thanking G-d for having made me a man, the inference is that I am doing *everything* that G-d demands of me. As a man there are many more obligations and, if I am not doing them exactly as G-d commands, my blessing might end up having exactly the opposite effect. Instead of it having its intended impact, my blessing could be the very medium that will trigger off a spiritual appraisal. Therefore, our Sages introduced one last “negative” blessing to allow me the opportunity to give thanks to G-d for the increased opportunities that I have as a man to perform the commandments - without it impinging negatively on me.

Paradoxically, despite its complex composition, this fourth blessing is not a negative reflection on women at all. Quite the opposite. It is the potential for men’s spiritual inadequacies that is the cause of this blessing being worded as it is.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

At the insistence of the *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 the *Bnei Yisrael* will finally enter the Land. The people are commanded to remove *challah*, 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.

ASK!

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Food Fight

Anonymous Teacher wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I am a teacher in the (withheld) school system, and I have a rule in my class that my students may not eat during class. If I catch a student eating, may I take away the food without returning it, or is this stealing?

Dear Anonymous Teacher,

Best would be to obtain permission from the parents for food confiscation. Otherwise, it would be an improper punishment. To punish with food confiscation, without such explicit permission, is a negative means to train a student.

- Source: *Iggrot Moshe 2:103*

Unveiling

Daniel wrote:

My grandfather's "Headstone" will be erected soon, just over a year after his death. I would appreciate some information regarding the halacha concerning this ceremony; a source to look up would be helpful. Todah Rabah.

Dear Daniel,

There are three basic reasons for a Headstone:

1. To mark the place as *tameh* (impure and off limits for *kohanim*).
2. To mark the place for people who want to visit it.
3. To honor the deceased.

According to the book "Gesher HaChaim", when visiting the grave during the first year it is customary to say seven paragraphs of Psalms: 33, 16, 17, 72, 91, 104, and 130. Afterwards one says Psalm 119 and recites the verses that spell the name of the deceased and the letters of the word "Neshama". Different communities have different customs.

The halachic section of the book "Gesher HaChaim" is soon to be published in English. There is another excellent book called "Mourning in Halacha," which is published by ArtScroll. Also, a popular work is "The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning" by Rabbi Maurice Lamm.

"May He swallow up death forever; may the L-rd G-d wipe away tears from every face." (Isaiah 25:8)

LETTER AND SPIRIT

Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch by Rabbi Yosef Hershman

Calev – Alone in Courage

When the spies return with their slanderous report, Calev and Yehoshua exhibited extraordinary strength of character and loyalty. When the people broke out in tumultuous cries, Calev hushed the crowd, refuting the spies' report and insisting that the Land was exceedingly good and with G-d's help, conquerable.

The verse that describes the spies' entry into the Land first uses the plural form (*vaya'alu*) and then the singular form (*vayavo*), such that the verse reads: *They went up from the south and came (singular) to Chevron.* Our Sages understand that the singular verb refers to Calev, who alone went to pray at the graves of the Patriarchs for the strength to resist the counsel of his colleagues. Later, Calev's connection to the city is sealed when he is given Chevron as an inheritance.

However, it appears that the other spies also reached Chevron. Their report describes the "children of the giants" who frightened them and left a powerful impression. This description caused the people to lose heart and courage. Those "children of giants" appear only in Chevron, and thus, all of the spies likely travelled together there. Why, then, does the verse use the singular form? Often the Torah uses the singular to denote many people who are of single heart and mind. For example, when the Jewish People camped around Sinai before the

giving of Torah, the verse describes their camping in the singular (*vayichan*). Our Sages comment, "As one man with one heart." So too, here, until the spies arrived in Chevron, they were of one heart and mind, of a common goal. But that changed in Chevron, upon the sight of the giants. This left such a strong impression on them that they had a change of heart. Their views began to change when their courage disappeared.

It is possible to reconcile the two interpretations. Calev's powerful influence kept his fellow delegates united in mind and spirit until they reached Chevron. There, the conflict broke out and that is what prompted Calev to pray at the graves of the Patriarchs for the strength to withstand the influence of the group, and to maintain his faithfulness. The singular verb indicates both: Under Calev's influence, the group travelled in unified loyalty, and then when the fear induced panic, Calev alone left the group to pray for assistance. Ultimately he is richly rewarded. Not only did he merit to enter the Land, whereas the rest of his generation did not – but the very place in which he departed from their treachery is given to him as an inheritance.

- *Source: Commentary, Bamidbar 13:22*

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