

SHABBAT LASHEM

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PARASHAT SHLACH | ISSUE 30

Sarah and Jason Moser | Bogrim Dvar Torah

The Hebrew word for the spies in our parasha is not מרגלים as we find in other contexts, such as Joseph accusing his brothers of being spies, or Joshua sending spies to Jericho. Rather the verb used is לתור. Rav Soloveitchik noted that the mission, at least as described here, was a study mission and not a military one. The questions being asked were about the demographics of the land, and its agriculture, its fertility and climate. Why would a military mission be told to bring back fruit? Why would the leaders of the people go on a spying mission?

So why send 'spies'? The Rav noted that the spies failed to learn from Miriam's sin. Miriam failed to appreciate the special, unique nature of her brother Moshe, and the spies failed to appreciate the special, unique nature of the Holy Land. The mission of the spies, as understood by Moshe, was to see the land - in the same way that, according to Halacha, a man or woman may not marry without seeing their future partner. We learn this from Isaac and Rivka - despite the testimony of Eliezer, Isaac had to see Rivka for himself. Why? Marriage is not a utilitarian arrangement, a partnership agreement. It is an existential commitment - a uniting of two souls - and as such requires first-hand knowledge.

This is alluded to in the word לתור, which connects to us to the phrase used at the end of the parasha ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ולא תתורו אחרי עיניכם. The tzitzit remind us not to follow those things that the heart desires and the eyes see - but here the "spies"

need to see and desire the land of Israel. This is what Moshe expected of the spies - to see the land's singularity, its specialness, a place from which God's attention is never withdrawn. However the spies failed to reach this level - they looked at the land as a practical, utilitarian item, a mundane resting place in which to live.

This also connects to the laws of tzitzit and the tchelet (blue thread). The Rav explained that the colour white symbolises clarity and rationality, that which is self-evident. Something that is white leaves no room for doubt, but is clear and certain. The tchelet is by contrast the blue of the seas and the heavens - those vast expanses, which even today remain largely unexplored. This reflects areas of life where mystery remains, and our perception fails. The tzitzit thus reflect our lives - there are periods where we have certainty and feel all is rational, planned and predictable, and then there are periods of puzzlement and mystery, leaving us shocked and humbled. This is true of Jewish history - we do not have just the white of certainty, or we would long ago have given up on the land of Israel, a small island surrounded by enemies and hatred. If we view Israel as a regular, mundane, practical state - there are easier places in the world in which to live. Our connection with Israel is not based only on logic but is emotional and spiritual. It is a metaphysical connection. We have to learn from the spies and see as Israel through the lens of love and not logic.

Sarah and Jason Moser, Nof Ayalon, Israel

Aloh Na'aleh or Al Ta'alu

Rav Aharon Herskovitz | Rav Shaliach

This week's parsha tells the story of the journey of the meraglim, the spies, to the Land of Canaan. The majority of the spies return with a negative report, discounting Bnei Yisrael's (and Hashem's) ability to successfully survive a military campaign in the land. After their initial report, Kalev is able to silence the nation for a moment and then states (Bamidbar 13:30): עלה נעלה וירשנו אותה כי יכול לנוכל לה - We shall surely go up and possess [the land], for we are surely able to do it.

These words, עלה נעלה, we shall surely go up, are motivating and empowering, encouraging listeners to stand up and do what needs to be done. To not be satisfied with the current situation, but to actively aim to change it, through confidence in the moral rightness of the path chosen. They have been a rallying cry for generations, and form an integral part of Bnei Akiva's anthem (written by Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriyah): בלב אמיץ בעזרת ה', עלה נעלה With a brave heart, and with the help of Hashem, we shall surely go up.

"It is important to also be constantly reflecting on what Hashem's will is, and if the path upon which we are walking is one that is reflective of the Divine will in this current situation."

However, the opposite message appears later in the parsha. Despite Kalev's and Yehoshua's best efforts at convincing Bnei Yisrael of the viability of the land and a military victory through Hashem's help, Bnei Yisrael sin and complain, longing for death in Egypt or the desert over death in the land of Canaan. Though Moshe is able to successfully plead with Hashem to not destroy Bnei Yisrael, the resulting punishment is that they will wander the desert for forty years, and only their children shall enter the land. At this point, Bnei Yisrael realise the error of their ways and mourn what has happened. The very next day they wake up, and attempt to fix what has gone wrong (14:40): And they woke up in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying "Behold, here we are, and we shall go up to the place that Hashem has said,

for [we realise that] we have sinned." Though they refused at the beginning to go up, they now realise that they should have. They want to right the wrong! However, Moshe explains that it's too late at this point, what's done is done and Hashem has already decreed that they will not succeed. He then adds (14:42): אל תעלו, do not go up, for Hashem is not in your midst, and [by not going up] you will not be struck down by your enemies.

Although Bnei Yisrael are encouraged at the beginning to "go up", Moshe now tells them that the time has passed, and they must not go up. What has changed?

The command to "go up" and later to "not go up" serves to show us that the path Bnei Yisrael chooses must be based off of the will of Hashem. Although Hashem commands us to go up, there may be times when His command is to not go up, to recognise that the reality has changed and that the Divine will is to be expressed through different actions from our side than we'd originally thought.

Confidence in the rightness of our path is necessary to actually get anything done: if we are half-committed to our path, unsure of what we are meant to be doing, it is unlikely that anything will actually get done. However, it is important to also be constantly reflecting on what Hashem's will is, and if the path upon which we are walking is one that is reflective of the Divine will in this current situation. To not be overly confident, constantly saying עלה נעלה in every situation, for there may indeed be points where Hashem wants to tell us אל תעלו - the time is not right to go up. May Hashem bless us with the wisdom and insight to understand the time for each approach.

Shabbat Shalom!



Dvar Halacha: Weekly Question :::::::::::

Have a question? Please email rav@bauk.org or call/message Rav Aharon at 07976642135.

ANONYMOUS QUESTION: I made chicken soup for shabbat on Thursday and had loads of leftovers after Friday night. As it was a two day chag afterwards, I wanted to know if I could freeze the soup on Shabbat so that it wouldn't get ruined?

ANSWER: The question involves two separate issues a) putting food in the freezer on Shabbat/chag so that it won't be ruined- is that an act of preparation from Shabbat to the week? b) is it permissible to freeze liquids on Shabbat/Yom Tov?

Is putting food in the freezer for later permitted, or is that a forbidden act of preparation? Putting food in the freezer is not a melacha, but a simple act. It may be considered preparing, but there is much reason to allow it: a) it is being done to prevent loss (Minchat Yitzchak 8:24) b) there is no significant act being done c) it's not a recognisable act of preparation (i.e. it's a routine act that would not cause someone to say "Oh, they're preparing for the week.") (Chayei Adam 153:6, which the MB 516:5 allows as well in sha'at hadchak).

Regarding the second concern, of freezing liquids, there is a dispute between the rishonim

as to why the Gemara in Shabbat 51b forbids mashing snow, with one opinion being that the issue is מוֹלִיד, creating a new entity. The Rama paskens like this opinion, and for this reason Ashkenazi practice is to put an ice cube into liquid instead of just leaving it to melt (as the water that's created via melting is then not recognisable). We might think that *creating* ice would be the same issue in reverse, and Ashkenazim would not be allowed to freeze things on Shabbat. However, there is reason to distinguish between the two processes, as water's natural state (at room temperature) is liquid- in its solid state (aka ice) it needs something actively different for it to maintain that state- creating ice may not be מוֹלִיד, as it would be viewed as a more temporary state. For this reason, many poskim (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Tzitz Eliezer, Shevet HaLevi) allow making ice on Shabbat *at least for the purpose of Shabbat*. The soup here is not being frozen for the purpose of Shabbat, but it might be even less of an issue than freezing water, as in both its liquid and solid state it's considered food.

***BOTTOM LINE*:** freezing leftover *food* on Shabbat/Yom Tov is fine, even if the purpose is to allow its continued consumption during the week. *Soup* may be frozen if there is more of a reason to do so, such as a lack of space in the refrigerator or that the soup won't keep until after the 3 days.

Community Updates

CONGRATULATIONS on a brilliant year for South Hampstead Bnei Akiva, Stanmore Bnei Akiva and Hendon Bnei Akiva who both have their last week of Sviva this Shabbat. Well done to the Roshim Louisa Stagni and Sam Bray, Joel Azulay and James Konn, and Daniella Wieder and to all the Madrichim and Chanichim. Hendon Bnei Akiva are also having a special Family Seudah Shlishit this week from 17:30 to 18:30. All parents and family members of children in the Sviva are invited to join for great food, singing and fun. The Family Seudah is to celebrate the last Sviva of the year and all that the madrichim and chanichim have achieved.

CONGRATULATIONS also to all our Kivun participants in Israel. Our 14 young people were pioneers in every sense of the word - joining and believing in what was a brand new program for Bnei Akiva UK. They have all grown tremendously through the experiences this year, and returning to the UK as better versions of themselves - equipped and motivated to make a positive impact on the Jewish world, in Bnei Akiva, on campus and beyond. The program concluded with a long weekend in the North of Israel, having a great time doing ATV-ing, paintball, and a tour of Tzfat. A highlight of the closing weekend was visiting the site of Biriya fortress, where in the pre-State era members of the Bnei Akiva movement faced attacks from the Syrian army, and entered into fierce arguments with the British mandate regarding their right to

live on that land; it was a place that taught participants that members of Bnei Akiva - just like themselves - have shaped and formed the modern State of Israel. Indeed throughout the year, we have tried to impress upon participants that it is incumbent upon them to shape modern Israel - and the Jewish World at large - in their own unique way. The Kivun closing Shabbat was spent in lovely accommodations just outside of Tzfat, and focused on processing and concluding the year. On Monday the group had a great last day together starting with a sunrise hike of Masada and time at the Dead Sea, and culminating with a Mesibat Siyum and finally closing "mifkad" at the Kotel.

THIS past Wednesday and Thursday Israel Machane 'Information Evenings' were held for parents of our 196 chanichim participating in Israel Machane this year. They took place in London and Manchester.

COMING UP next week on the 13th June: The Rav and Rabbanit Shaliach will be hosting an Israeli Wine and Cheese tasting night, in partnership with the Jewish Agency. Come and join us as we are led by Orit Grinboim-Liron, a professionally trained wine connoisseur, on a magical evening by tasting four Israeli wines, accompanied by cheese, snacks and a light sushi dinner. This event is open to all Bogrim. Please contact rav@bauk.org to reserve your place!

