

## **PARSHAT SHLACH**

### **PART I - QUESTIONS FOR THE 'SHABBOS TABLE'**

#### **THREE OUT OF SEVEN**

1. Review Bamdibar 13:23, noting which fruits the spies chose to bring back to show the people. Note as well how many of them are from the seven species! Attempt to explain why they bought back fruit with them. In your opinion, was this a good idea, or a bad idea? [In your answer, relate to 13:20,26-27.]

Can you explain why only these three species were chosen, but not the other four? In your answer, relate to 13:20, and the various fruit seasons in the land of Israel.

2. Recall that in the desert, Bnei Yisrael ate from the manna – which was described in both Shmot 16:15 & 31 & Bamidbar 11:7-8 in a very special manner. Review those descriptions, and note if they match in any way to the four remaining species that the spies did not bring back. How does this enhance your understanding of the questions above?

#### **TZITZIT – L'CHATCHILA or B'DIAVAD?**

1. Review the mitzvah of tzitzit as described in 15:37-41, noting any parallels (textual or thematic) to the story of the spies in chapter 13. Based on these parallels (and where in Chumash this law is recorded), would it make sense that the laws of tzitzit were given **because** of the sin of spies?

If so, in your opinion, would have there been a mitzva to wear tzitzit had that sin not taken place?

2. Review Devarim 22:12 – how does this law relate to the laws of tzitzit in Bamdibar chapter 15?

In your opinion, which of these two laws was given first? In your answer, relate to Devarim 5:1-2, 5:27-28, and 6:1-7 (in relation to when the laws of the main speech of Sefer Devarim were first given by God to Moshe).

Based on these sources, could you suggest an additional reason why the laws of tzitzit are 'repeated' in Sefer Bamidbar?

3. Review the other laws in chapter 15, e.g. "nesachim", "chala", and the offering for a sin committed 'unintentionally' [shogeg], etc.

Do any of these laws relate in any manner to the story of the spies? If not, why are they recorded at this point in Sefer Bamidbar? If so, what is their connection – and again, in your opinion, would these mitzvot have been given had it not been for the sin of the spies?

#### **WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

1. The names of the 12 'spies' in Parshat Shlach (see 13:4-16) provide us with 24 examples of biblical names. Similarly, in the opening chapter of Parshat Bamidbar (see 1:5-15) we find yet another 24 names.

Take a look at those names, paying careful attention when a certain name includes a reference to God. [For example: 'tzuri-el' = God is my rock.] Each time that you do find such a reference to God in a name, note the different Names that are used (e.g. Kel, Shakai, Tzur, etc.). [It would be helpful to make a list.]

As you are probably familiar, the Bible uses a wide range of names when it refers to God, many of which you most probably found when you studied these names.

Nonetheless, did you notice that there was one primary name for God which seems to be missing! [If so, what name was missing?] Can you explain why?

2. Next, carefully review Shmot 6:2-3, noting how these psukim explain which of God's Names were 'known' to the forefathers, while God's special Name [Yud.Key.Vav.Key] was not 'known' – until the process of Yetziat Mitzrayim had begun!

Considering that all of the people whose names are recorded (in Bamidbar 1:5-15 and 13:4-6) were born before the process of Yetziat Mitzrayim began, can you explain why God's special Name is not found in this list?

How would this explain why Moshe changes Yehoshua's name from Hoshea bin Nun to Y-E'hoshua? What letters are added to his name, and name of God does this reflect?

Relate your answer to these two letters [yud.heh] that are found in the names of the Kings of Yehuda, e.g. Yedidya (=Shlomo), Yehoshaphat, Yehoram, Chizkiyahu, etc.]

Note as well Yehoshua's (and Kalev's) primary message to the nation when they return from their mission (see 14:8)? How does this 'message' relate to the nature of Yehoshua's new name?

3. Note also the frequency of God's Name in the list of the 'meraglim' (see 13:4-16) compared to its frequency in the list of the nesil'im (see 1:5-15). Do you think that this may be significant as well? [Note also the frequency of the names of animals in those two lists. Is this necessarily derogatory?]

#### **SOME VERY SPECIAL MITZVOT**

1. See Rashi on 15:41 where he quotes from R. Moshe Ha-darshan in regard to certain mitzvot that are 'equivalent' to **all** the mitzvot ('shkula kenegged kol ha-mitzvot'). Among them, he lists 'avoda zara', 'chillul shabbat' and 'tzitzit'.

According to Chazal, there is one other mitzva that is considered 'shkula kenegged kol ha-mitzvot' - i.e. the mitzva to dwell in the land of Israel. How does this statement reflect the entire group of mitzvot that are found in Bamidbar chapter 15 and their thematic connection to 'chet ha-meraglim' (i.e. Bnei Yisrael not wanting to enter the Land of Israel)?

[Hope this one wasn't too zionistic.]

2. The mitzvot in 15:1-11 explain the flour, oil and wine offering (better known as 'nesachim') which must be brought together with each korban **olah** or **shlamim**.

Considering that the laws of **ola** & **shlamim** are first detailed in Vayikra chapters 1-3, why do you think that these laws of nesachim are recorded here instead of there?

[Relate to the header of this parshia and its juxtaposition to the story of chet ha-meraglim.]

3. Is there a simple and very logical reason why the obligation to bring nesachim is only once Bnei Yisrael enter the land (see 15:1)? Relate to where they are now living (in the desert) and what their present source of food is.

#### **SELECTIVE ATTRIBUTES**

1. Compare God's 'midot ha-rachamim' in the aftermath of chet ha-meraglim (see 14:17-23) to those in the aftermath of chet ha-egel (see Shmot 34:5-9). Can you explain why certain attributes are not repeated?

In your answer, relate to the nature of each respective sin, and its pending punishment.

2. If you have time, relate your analysis to Devarim 9:25-29. Note the context of those psukim (in chapter 9), and attempt to determine if Moshe Rabbeinu is quoting the midot ha-rachamim from chet ha-egel or from chet ha-meraglim (or both)?

Can you explain why? Relate your answer to the context of that chapter, noting especially 9:5-8 & 9:22-24!

3. Review again Bamidbar 14:11-20, noting the reasons that Moshe uses to convince Hashem why not to destroy the nation. In your opinion, is Moshe asking for total forgiveness, and hence God should allow them to continue on to Israel, or is he simply asking that God not kill them immediately, but Moshe would agree that they shouldn't enter the land. In your answer, relate to 14:20!

## PART II - QUESTIONS FOR PREPARATION (for weekly shiur)

1. To the best of your recollection, what was the 'sin' of the meraglim (the spies), and what was their punishment? What precisely did they do wrong?

Similarly, what was the sin of the people at the incident of chet ha-meraglim, and what was their punishment?

Based on your answer, attempt to explain why God did not accept the 'repentance' declared by the 'ma'apilim' (see 14:39-42) when they announce their willingness to fight and conquer the land? [Keep this question in mind as you continue.]

2. In Parshat Shlach, are the meraglim ever referred to as such? If so, where? If not, what Hebrew word is used to describe them? What does that word mean?

3. To determine more precisely what their mission was (and why they were sent), make a list all of the questions that the meraglim were instructed to answer. Try to organize them into two different categories. Based on this list, how would you define their mission?

How does this relate to your answer to question #1?

4. Next, carefully compare their mission to the mission of the spies that Yehoshua sends (as described in Yehoshua chapter 2). In what manner are these two missions similar, and in what manner are they different?

Use this comparison to support your answer to question #2.

Note **who** sends each group, and to **whom** they report back (and why).

Attempt to explain as well why the names of the group sent by Moshe are 'publicized', while the names of the group sent by Yehoshua remain 'secret'!

5. Review Bamidbar 34:16-29 (noting its context from 33:50 onward). How can these psukim help you understand at least one of the 'positive' reasons for why it may have been necessary to send the meraglim?

6. Based on their mission (as you defined it above), when the meraglim report back to the nation - does their report follow the guidelines of their mission? [Or at least - up until what point in the narrative does their report concur with their mission?]

If their report was accurate, in what manner did they sin?

If their report was inaccurate - explain where and why they lied.

7. See Ramban on 13:27-31 and 14:1, and relate his commentary to the above questions

8. Compare Moshe & Aharon's reaction to the report of the spies (see 14:5) to that of Kalev and Yehoshua (see 13:30, 14:6-9).

Compare this reaction of Moshe and Aharon to other instances in Sefer Bamidbar when Bnei Yisrael complained, e.g. Korach, mei meriva, etc.

[Relate this to the topic of Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership as discussed in last week's shiur as well.]

9. Read the parallel account of chet ha-meraglim in Devarim chapter 1 (see 1:19-45). What word does the Torah use to describe the meraglim in that account?

According to those psukim, what was their mission?

Relate this to your answer to question #2 above.

In your opinion, is it possible to reconcile these two accounts (see the commentators in Sefer Devarim who attempt to answer this question). Relate the differences between them to the purpose of each Sefer. [i.e. relate to what Moshe Rabbeinu is emphasizing in Sefer Devarim (based on chapters 2-3, especially 3:21-22!), compared to the primary theme of Sefer Bamidbar.

10. From Sefer Devarim, it seems as though sending the meraglim was the people's idea, while in Sefer Bamidbar it seems to have been a Divine commandment.

Based on the planned nature of God's relationship with Bnei Yisrael when they will live in the land of Israel (as opposed to the nature of that relationship when they traveled thru the desert), what positive aspect can be found in sending spies to check out the land before entering the land?

## PART III - PARSHANUT

### DIBA – TRUE or FALSE?

1. In 13:32 we are told how the meraglim spoke of **dibat ha-aretz**. In your opinion, does 'diba' imply something true or something false? Relate to the remainder of this pasuk.

[Relate also to Yosef & his brothers in Breishit 37:2!]

See Ibn Ezra on 13:32. How does he answer this question?

Then see Ramban on this pasuk. How is his answer similar to Ramban, and in what manner is it different?

### NEW MITZVOT?

2. In chapter 15, we find several mitzvot that appear to be totally unconnected to the ongoing narrative (see shiur on Parshat Naso). In your opinion, where in Chumash would you say that these mitzvot belong?

[When were these mitzvot given? On Har Sinai? From the ohel mo'ed (see Vayikra 1:1 and the mitzvot which follow)? During one of the stops on their journey?]

Can you find a thematic connection between these mitzvot and the story of the meraglim?

After you have tried, look up the following commentaries and note how they have dealt with this question.

a) Rashi, 15:2.

b) Ibn Ezra 15:2 (read carefully!)

[Note how he does all of these mitzvot together!]

c) Ramban 15:2, 15:32 & 15:38

Ramban 15:32 - Relate this Ramban to his opinion with regard to 'ein mukdam u-me'uchar ba-Torah'!

d) Chizkuni 15:2, 15:32, 15:40-41

e) See also Rashi 15:39 on 've-lo taturu' - Why do you think that he quotes the pasuk from 13:25!

f) Finally, see Seforno in his introduction to Sefer Bamidbar (found in the Torat Chaim edition at the beginning of Sefer Breishit). How does he explain the connection between these mitzvot and the ongoing narrative?

[Note his explanation of Sefer Bamidbar in general. Relate this to our shiur on Parshat Naso.]

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menachem