

# OHR NET

SHABBAT PARSHAT SHLACH · 16 SIVAN 5774 · JUNE 14, 2014 · VOL. 21 NO. 38

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE WORLD IS A MIRROR

“Send for yourselves...” (13-2)

There’s an axiom in creative photography that a photographer doesn’t photograph what he sees. He photographs who he is.

The motivation to capture a specific event or landscape or face, on film or in pixels, has much to do with the resonance that our internal reality finds in the outside world.

The world of art finds paradigms in the external world for internal realities. This is one of the wellsprings of creative art. However, the basis of this idea goes much further back than photography.

It is said in name of the Baal Shem Tov that all we see around us is like a mirror of who we are.

G-d shows us who we are through what we see.

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 15:5) asks why the Torah juxtaposes the section that deals with the sin of the Spies with the section of Miriam’s punishment. Ostensibly they are unconnected. The Midrash answers that Miriam was punished for speaking *lashon hara* about her brother, Moshe — “and these *rashaim*, (evil people) saw this but failed to take the lesson to heart,” for the Spies spoke *lashon hara* about

the Land of Israel.

They saw Miriam’s punishment and it failed to impact on their internal world; they failed to see that they were looking into a mirror.

But why were they called “*rashaim*”? At that point in the story they were righteous people, the leaders of the nation.

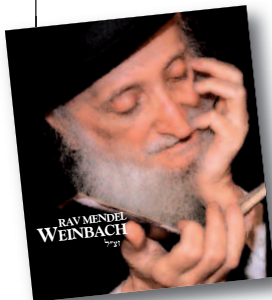
The generation of the desert was on the highest level since Adam *harishon* (the first man). They should have realized that G-d had shown them the punishment of Miriam to draw a lesson from it: that they too were vulnerable to the sin of *lashon hara* and to guard themselves accordingly.

Similarly, in Parshat Nasso the Torah juxtaposes the sin of the Sotah (a wife suspected of adultery) with the Nazir (someone who takes a vow of abstinence) to teach us that anyone who sees the punishment of a Sotah should take a vow to temporarily abstain from wine, for he sees to where indulgence in wine leads.

The world about us is but a mirror to ourselves.

• Sources: *Alei Shor*, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Part One, Page 137; thanks to Rabbi Shlomo Greenwald

## A Memorial Tribute to Rav Weinbach zt”l



The Memorial Tribute Book for Rav Weinbach zt”l is available in print at Ohr Somayach.\*

A PDF format is available for free download on [www.ohr.edu](http://www.ohr.edu).

\* Suggested minimum donation for the printed version is 36 nis.

Proceeds will be used for the Gemach Charity Fund established by Rav Weinbach, zt”l.

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

At the insistence of *Bnei Yisrael*, and with G-d's permission, Moshe sends 12 scouts, one from each tribe, to reconnoiter 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.

## TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

## TAANIT 2 - 8

*Rava said: "That young rabbinical student who seems to be angry is burning up with the 'fire of the Torah'."*

Even though anger is one of the most despicable character traits, the Torah is like "fire" and can "widen one's heart" to enable the person to have a greater ability to understand the true meaning of our existence. A rabbinical student who seems angry should be judged favorably and not seen as one who is truly angry or spiteful. Rather, he has an inner "heat" from the Torah that may cause him to "boil over" from taking matters to heart more seriously than others do — and helps him change for the better.

Ravina qualifies this, however, and teaches that such a person should nevertheless make a concerted effort to act in a pleasant and friendly manner that is becoming for a student of the Torah (Rashi, Maharsha).

• *Ta'anit 4a*

*Rabbi Chanina said: "Much have I learned from my rabbis, even more have I learned from my colleagues, but from my students I have learned more than from anyone else."*

The success of Torah learning is proportional to the degree of questions and discussions of a Torah subject, which lead to greater understanding. Rabbi Chanina is certainly not downplaying the importance of what he learned from his teachers and friends. However, he teaches that one's greatest understanding results from the process of intense questioning and reasoning with the various viewpoints of his students who seek to understand the Torah in a clear manner from him (Maharsha). Any teacher of Torah can easily identify with this phenomenon!

• *Ta'anit 7a*

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## 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 *challah* different from other *mitzvot* associated with Eretz Yisrael?
17. What is the minimum amount of *challah* 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 *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.

# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT SHLACH

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

**T**his Parsha presents numerous obvious difficulties. The nation is poised to enter the Land of Israel, a fertile and bountiful land promised to our forefathers hundreds of years earlier. The people experienced one miracle after another when G-d has taken them out of Egypt and sustained them in a barren desert. Why does G-d tell Moshe to send spies to check out the Land? What could they possibly discover that would make any difference to them?

Abarbanel maintains it was the people themselves who wanted to send the spies and have them report back to them directly. G-d knew that if they were prevented from sending spies they would be suspicious that the Land was not suitable. At the same time, if G-d allowed them to bypass Moshe and send the spies themselves, this would be seen as a rebellion against their leader. Therefore, Moshe, as G-d's prophet, would send them and they would report directly back to him.

In any case, there clearly was no need to send spies and it was evident that the faith of the people was not strong enough to deal with the looming challenge. The people knew that the direct Divine intervention they had been experiencing, such as the pillars of cloud and fire that directed them and the manna which sustained them, would cease once they entered the Land. The responsibility to conquer the Land and sustain themselves in it would be in their hands. They couched their request in purely military terms, which

was more acceptable, but their real concern was much deeper. Their emphasis on tactics and strategy was merely a subterfuge for their more fundamental lack of trust in G-d about the worth of the Land in all respects and their own worthiness to benefit from it. If their motivation was simply to prepare for a successful military campaign, one or two nameless spies would have been sufficient and prudent. But since he understood their true motivation, he made sure to appoint respected leaders from each of the diverse tribes. This way each tribe would be able to look out for its own unique interests. For this reason, Moshe did not send a representative from the tribe of Levi, since they had no inheritance in the Land.

Their fundamental lack of faith in the desirability and importance of the Land of Israel is clearly evident from the initial words of the spies when they return from their mission: "We came to the Land to which you sent us." They should have said, "...which the L-rd our G-d gave to us," or "to the Land which G-d promised to our forefathers." It was their opinion that they were not worthy of this gift and did not have an overwhelming desire to go and see it in the first place.

This fundamental disconnect from their unique connection to the Land of Israel clouded all of their perceptions and interpretations of what they saw and experienced during their forty days in the Land.

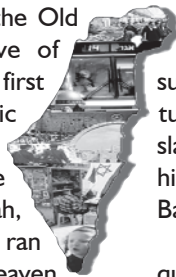
### LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## THE CAVE OF TZIDKIYAHU

**T**he long tunnel underneath the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, known as the Cave of Tzidkiyahu, recalls the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash and the end of the Davidic dynasty.

As the Babylonian armies carried out the destruction of Jerusalem, the last king of Judah, King Tzidkiyahu, fled through a secret tunnel that ran from his palace to the plains of Jericho. But Heaven



had marked him for destruction as well, and a deer was sent to run on top of the tunnel. The enemy soldiers pursued the deer and caught up with it at the other end of the tunnel just as Tzidkiyahu and his sons were exiting. They slaughtered the king's sons before his eyes and then blinded him and carried him off in chains to imprisonment in Babylon.

It is told that it was from this tunnel that stones were quarried for the building of the Beit Hamikdash.

## PROOF OF G-D

From: Marcello

Dear Rabbi,  
Could you please present a brief and convincing proof for the existence of G-d?

Dear Marcello,

In a nutshell, you're asking for a lot.

But even if I weren't constrained by your request for brevity, I couldn't give you a *conclusive* proof for the existence of G-d. That would fundamentally negate free-will.

However, I will try to present one of several arguments for a rational belief in G-d.

Existence is not an illusion. It really exists. Existence doesn't spontaneously come into being from non-existence. It might be coagulated and formulated from a composite of pre-existing parts, no matter how small. But this sub-matter, or even energy, is subject to the same dictum: it cannot spontaneously bring itself into being from nothing. This dictates that something brought Existence into being, *ex-nihilo*.

This Source or Cause of all existence is referred to in Judaism as G-d, the Creator.

Since G-d created space, the place of Creation, including time, which is merely a function of space, it necessarily follows that G-d precedes, is independent of, and outside space and

time. In this way, G-d is non-finite — Infinite. The Creator is therefore unlimited by space and time, and exists everywhere at all times, with no beginning or end.

By the way, this does not contradict what I posited earlier, that existence must have a beginning, because that applies to physical matter and energy, but such limitations cannot be applied by the limited to the Unlimited.

Further, it follows that there can be only One such Infinite Creator. And even though we can conceive of multiple parallel infinities, conceptually represented by, for example, parallel lines, of which there may be many, or even an infinite number of simultaneously existing infinities, since this is limited to only one plane, it at most describes only "relative" infinity.

However, the "infinity" of the Creator is absolutely infinite, better represented by the unquantifiable totality of such infinite parallel lines, not on one plane, but on an infinite number of intersecting planes. This mathematical representation of the concept of absolute, all-inclusive "infinity", which not only contains everything, but actually is everything, is what we're referring to when we refer to G-d.

Jewish mysticism explores and explains how both the realm of "relative infinity" (corresponding to the spiritual, non-physical realm) and the realm of the physical and finite are actually even able to exist within the absolute "infinity" of G-d rather than dissolving, imploding or reverting back into It.

But since you asked for brevity, I'll leave this dimension of the discussion for another time...

## IT'S NOT Quite That Simple

by Rabbi Dr. Yitzchak Greenblatt

### LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

Little orphan Annie lives on the street with her dog, Sandy and her 19 orphaned friends. Rabbi Cohen is a tender-hearted and very holy man. He runs an organization called **H.O.M.E. (Housing for Orphans Made Easy)**. The plight of Annie and her rosy-cheeked friends has long weighed heavily on his soul. Mr. Warbucks owns a large building - The Haven - on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, a building which just happens to be large enough to accommodate little orphan Annie and her 19 orphan friends. And the previous tenant has just moved out.

When the good people at H.O.M.E. tell Rabbi Cohen about The Haven, he has an idea. He schedules a meeting with Mr. Warbucks and negotiates a rental price for the whole building — \$120,000 a year. Mr. Warbucks, however, is a shrewd businessman and cannot resist sweetening the deal for himself. He knows that Rabbi Cohen is Jewish (perhaps the *yarmulke* gave it away?) and he also knows that the Jewish calendar differs from the regular Gregorian calendar. Crucially, the Jewish year usually has 11 fewer days. So Mr. Warbucks, being the oh-so-charming profiteer that he is, tells Rabbi Cohen that the 10-year rental agreement will be for \$120,000 per Jewish year, beginning on

the 1st of Tishrei in two weeks' time, a seemingly innocent move which will net Mr. Warbucks an extra few hundred bucks, as the \$120,000 now pays for fewer days.

Rabbi Cohen, not having much experience in matters financial and being slightly blinded by his excitement at having found a suitable place for his favorite band of vagrant but melodious orphans, agrees. He contacts some of his wealthy philanthropic donors and the next day Rabbi Cohen and a smug Mr. Warbucks sign the rental contract and the deal is done. The building is renovated and a few weeks later our merry ensemble of overjoyed children moves into their new home, complete with a bespoke kennel for Sandy the golden retriever.

Twelve Jewish months (354 days) later, Mr. Warbucks, still feeling rather pleased with himself about his ruse, finds out that his "cunning" plan may not have been so cunning after all. When he goes to Rabbi Cohen to collect for the next year's rent, Rabbi Cohen looks bemused. "The Jewish year isn't over for another month!" he says. "What do you mean?" booms Mr. Warbucks, "The Jewish year is shorter than the regular year!" "Actually," says Rabbi Cohen, "this year is a leap year, and a

*continued on page six*

## THE SHEMONEH ESREI - THE SECOND BLESSING (I)

### **Resurrection of the Dead (Techi'at Hameitim)**

In order to fully grasp the concept of the resurrection of the dead, one must first understand the true purpose of death. In the beginning, when G-d created Man, He intended for him to live eternally. However, when Adam sinned, death was decreed upon Mankind as a result.

At first glance, death seems like a very harsh punishment for only one sin. It also doesn't seem fair for all humans to have to pay for a sin they themselves did not commit.

According to esoteric teachings Adam, being the first man, included within him all of the potential souls which were to be born, so when he sinned in the Garden of Eden, the future of all humanity was directly affected.

Thus, the Arizal explains based on Kabbalah: "Know, according to esoteric teachings, the entire nation of Israel is like one body which was included in the soul of Adam *harishon*... and each person is like a particular limb of a body, and this is what is meant that all Jewish people are connected one to another if they sin... when one person sins it is as if the other also sins, therefore the text of confession was established in the plural form." (When a person does a mitzvah as well, it can help another person.)

As a result of the first sin all of Mankind became blemished together with Adam; all must take part in repairing the damage. If Mankind was to live forever in this new state, Man would remain imperfect forever. So, G-d, in His infinite wisdom, decreed that Man must die, for only through death and decay could the body and soul acquire their full *tikun* (repair) and eventually regain the perfection (*shleimut*) that was once theirs.

After the sin, the body became much more attached to evil, and the soul's job of refining and elevating the physical body became so difficult that one lifetime would no longer be enough. The world at large was also affected by Man's sin and must also be fixed. This is the deeper meaning of what the Sages say, that the world will be for six thousand years, then for one thousand years the world will be desolate, and then G-d will rebuild the world anew. At that time G-d will resurrect the dead, reuniting body and soul. In this new state the soul will be able to purify the body completely, resulting in their total unification. Body and soul will then both partake of the eternal life of reward which was intended from the beginning (See *Derech Hashem*, ch. 1, part 3, authored by the Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lutzatto 1707-1746).

## IT'S NOT *Quite That Simple*

*continued from page five*

Jewish leap year has 13 months." "What!" cries Mr. Warbucks, "That's ridiculous! I obviously intended to make the rent \$10,000 for each of the 12 Jewish months - how was I to know about this leap year business? Why should you get an extra month for free?" So who is right? Does Mr. Warbucks deserve an extra \$10,000 for the extra month, or does \$120,000 per Jewish year mean \$120,000 for any year, be it the 12- or 13-month variety?

There is a *mishna* in Tractate *Bava Kama* which seems to address our case directly:

If someone rents out a house to his fellow for a year, and the year becomes leap year, the (extra month of) leap year is to the renter's benefit. (102b)

Seemingly then, Mr Warbucks is out of luck - a year is a year is a year. Rabbi Cohen and the orphans can start celebrating a free month's lodgings.

But, as with everything in Judaism, it's not quite that simple. Look a little more closely at the phrasing of the *mishna*: "If ... the year becomes a leap year." How does a year "become" a leap year? Surely it is or it isn't? The reference here is to the practice of fixing the calendar months on the basis of witnesses who had seen the new moon, which was the common practice at the time of the *mishna*. Every few years, the Sanhedrin would declare an extra month to the year, a leap year, in order to keep

the solar and lunar calendars in synch, with Passover celebrated in the spring. This decision was not taken until late in the year, so when a rental contract was signed early on in the year, it really wasn't known whether the year extended to include a 13th month. Therefore, it would make sense to say that since the parties agree to a *per year* rental, the intention was for this to cover *any* year. But in our times the Jewish calendar is fixed by astronomical calculations, it was known in advance that the year would be a leap year. Perhaps then, Mr. Warbucks can claim that he signed the contract in error?

This cannot be true, however. The authoritative Code of Jewish Law says the law in such a case follows the law of the *mishna*, and so Mr. Warbucks will lose out. Why is this so? One way to understand this is to take into account the fact that it is perfectly possible for anyone to check a Jewish calendar and find out which years are leap years. Therefore, Mr. Warbucks' ignorance won't be an excuse, and little orphan Annie and her friends will get the extra month for free. Sandy will be thrilled!

Our story has three morals. Firstly, have someone who knows what they're talking about look over your contracts. Secondly, don't try to pull one over on a Rabbi. And lastly, and most importantly, when you're dealing with orphans, act charitably. The Torah repeats over and over again the commandments to act kindly towards orphans, widows and other vul-