

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 35

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SHELACH LECHA

26th Sivan 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 13, verses 1 - 20

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe to send out twelve men, one man from each tribe to spy out the land of Canaan.
- ✚ Moshe chose the leaders of all the tribes for the task, including Hoshea Ben Nun, whom Moshe now officially called Yehoshua, by adding a letter Yud to his name for protection.
- ✚ Moshe instructs the men to report back their findings regarding the strength of the current inhabitants of Canaan and to also bring back samples of the produce grown, which will tell Moshe that the land is good and fertile.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 13, verse 21 – Chapter 14, verse 7

- ✚ After forty days the spies returned. Carrying a giant cluster of grapes, pomegranates and figs. They tell Bnai Yisrael that the land indeed flows with milk and Honey.
- ✚ However they also unfortunately report back that the occupying nation is powerful and their cities are heavily fortified. "We look like grasshoppers compared to the giants in the land. Caleb, of the tribe of Yehuda and Yehoshua, are the only spies who believe despite this. Canaan is conquerable and that they should enter the land now and claim it for themselves, but national hysteria breaks out and all they want to do is stone these two honest leaders to death before choosing new leaders to take them back to Mitzraim.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 14, verses 8 - 25

- ✚ Hashem's Shekinah (presence) rests on the Ohel Moed. He informs Moshe that rather than escort Bnai Yisrael into a land they do not want. He will destroy them all now and make Moshe's descendants into his new nation. Moshe implores Hashem not to kill his people, arguing the fact that if Hashem carries out his threat, all the other nations of the world will proclaim Hashem must be weak. He had to annihilate them all in the desert because he was unable to bring his chosen nation into the Promised Land.
- ✚ Hashem allows Moshe to convince him hence sparing their lives, allowing them to live.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 14, verse 26 - Chapter 15, verse 7

- ✚ Hashem makes a decree that those people who have tested him ten times and have not heeded to his word will never enter the land. As punishment Bnai Yisrael are forced to wander the desert for forty years, coinciding with the number of days the spies travelled through the land of Israel.
- ✚ The Ten spies who gave a bad report died from a plague. Some of Bnai Yisrael who realized the grave error they had made by believing the spies, tried to conquer the land by themselves but were struck down by their enemies.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 15, verse 8 - 15

- ✚ Hashem teaches Moshe, upon entering Israel any individual who pledges to bring a Korban (sacrifice) must also bring an accompaniment consisting of a wine libation and a flour offering mixed with olive oil.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 15, verses 16 - 26

- ✚ Hashem also tells Moshe, that every time they want to make bread, they must put aside a portion of dough and give it to a Kohen.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 15, verses 27 - 41

- ✚ A man is found desecrating the Shabbat, by gathering wood and is executed.
- ✚ The mitzvah of wearing Tzitzits (fringes) on a four cornered garment is explained

Haftorah –YEHOShUA (JOSHUA) Chapter 2 verses 1 to 24

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Joshua sent two spies to Jericho, where they lodged at an inn run by a woman named Rahab. Their presence was quickly discovered by the king who sent for Rahab and asked her to turn them in.
- ✚ Rahab told the king that her guests had already departed, when actually she had hidden them on her rooftop.
- ✚ At Rahab's request, the two spies assured her that she and her family would not be harmed when Bnai Yisrael will come and conquer Jericho, providing that she would tie a scarlet thread and hang it from her window as a sign that she helped the men to escape.
- ✚ The two spies returned back to Yehoshua and gave a glowing report of what they saw.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ When Moshe sent out spies in this week's sedra they came back with a negative report about the land of Israel and in doing so convinced the people that its occupants are too strong
- ✚ However the spies in the Haftorah returned back with a positive report which encouraged Bnai Yisrael to begin their attack and reclaim their promised land.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

The Torah's account of the twelve spies is well known but what can we learn from it? As we know the outlook of the ten spies were not very bright. Their report was one of doom and gloom. They only saw the problems instead of the possibilities. Whereas, the other two spies, Caleb and Yehoshua (Joshua) were very optimistic. Their report was one of hope that with Hashem's help they would be able to defeat the 'Giants' and conquer the land which was promised to them.

Let's look a little closer into this negative attitude of the ten spies. Firstly they had the bad character trait of being doubtful which caused them to question Hashem and Moshe leading them to victory in conquering the land. Secondly, Self-depreciation. "We are only grasshoppers compared to them." They saw themselves as tiny insects about to be squashed by their opposition's superior army. They were naturally afraid of what would happen if they failed and because of this negativity, the spies managed to influence the whole congregation that entering the land would be futile, and they would be better off returning back to the land of Mitzraim to become slaves once more.

Caleb and Yehoshua were different. They had a different disposition and focus on what lay ahead. Bnai Yisrael were on the brink of entering the land and conquering it for themselves. Both Men had the Emunah that Hashem had taken them this far and would not fail them now, They both exhumed great courage and self-confidence in the outcome of capturing the walled cities and defeating the 'Giants' because they understood the land of Israel was Hashem's gift to them and all the people had to do was to show their willingness to follow in Hashem's footsteps and be obedient towards him in order to receive it.

True appreciation of our abilities and blessings we receive from Hashem will lead us into positive action. Unfortunately today, most of us are facing an uphill struggle, viewing all the problems which are going on in the world all around us. Yet; we all have a choice to make. We could be negative like the ten spies who foresee no hope or take the positive traits and attitudes of Caleb and Yehoshua and act now to ultimately lead us into victory. In conclusion: 'Don't be a whiner! Be a Winner instead for Hashem.

