

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

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SHELACH LECHA

26th Sivan 5776

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.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO THE SEDRA:

- ✚ When a man looks at his Tzitzits, our sages say he will be able to recollect and remember all of the mitzvors in the torah. How is this possible?
- ✚ The Gematria of ציצית Tzitzit equates to 600. One corner of the Tzitzit is made up of 8 strings and five knots. Totalling 613 which is exactly the same number of commandments written in the Torah.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

After receiving permission from Hashem, Moshe selected both Caleb and Yehoshua along with ten other men to enter and spy out the Promised Land of Israel. After returning back from a forty-day exploration, the spies gathered all Bnai Yisrael in front of Moshe to report back their findings. The ten men told the ensemble "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does indeed flow with milk and honey, just like Hashem promised. However, there is a major problem which will be too difficult for us to overcome and resolve. The current inhabitants of the land are very powerful, and all of their cities are very large and heavily fortified. This will mean it would be virtually impossible to penetrate their walls and conquer it for ourselves." The ten spies report was so harsh and negative that it frightened the people and they cried and complained to Moshe for dragging them into the desert to die.

To counterbalance the arguments and due to their faithfulness and commitment towards Hashem, both Caleb and Yehoshua had a totally different attitude from the other spies of what they had witnessed with their own eyes and quickly jumped to the Promise Lands defence. Trying desperately to help calm down and pacify the escalating situation. Yehoshua and Caleb told the crowd "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good and is ready for us to enter now! Don't listen to the other spies and don't be afraid of its current occupants as their divine protection in no more. Remember, Hashem is on our side and we should not rebel against him. As long as Hashem is pleased with us, he will lead us all into the land, flowing with milk and honey, and we will conquer it for our own with little resistance.

Caleb argued that Hashem had already miraculously taken everyone this far and therefore wouldn't fail them at the final hurdle. Caleb stressed that they could easily march into the land as a united nation and take possession of the land. All they needed to require was the faith and belief that they can certainly do it and be successful. Yet the damage had already been inflicted and despite Caleb's and Yehoshua's best efforts they were unable to convince the now distraught people. This culminated in Hashem judging the people harshly and decreeing that not only Bnai Yisrael would have to wait a further Forty years before they would be allowed to enter the land but every person twenty years old or older would die in the wilderness and would never see or enter the land for themselves.

Caleb and Joshua were the only two exceptions to this decree because they never lost faith and had wholeheartedly tried to defend Hashem's honour. The faithfulness of Yehoshua and Caleb teaches us that even though the odds may be stacked against us, we still need to take a stand and take Hashem's side even when the majority will not listen. If we dedicate our lives in this way, then Hashem will definitely reward and bless us in ultimately achieving our common goal of entering the promise land ourselves and the chance to live in perfect peace for all eternity.

