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Parshat Sh'lach

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Of Two Stonings

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

“And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh of those who had scouted the land, rent their clothes and exhorted the whole Israelite community: “The land that we traversed and scouted is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will bring us into that land, a land that flows with milk and honey, and give it to us; only you must not rebel against the Lord... As the whole community threatened to pelt them with stones, the Presence of the Lord appeared in the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites.” (Bamidbar 14:6-10, JPS trans.)

As the Jews’ fear grew after the report of the spies, their reactions became increasingly frenzied. What started as fear became rebellion, and then an attempt to return to Egypt, and culminated with an attempted stoning.

Most commentaries (Rashi, Ibn Ezra) contend that the Jews’ targets were Kalev and Yehoshua. Their desire to silence opposition brought them to attempted murder. Several midrashim (Bamidbar Rabah, Mechilta) argue that it was Moshe and Aharon who the Jews wanted to kill. They wanted to take their anger out on the leaders responsible for taking them out of Egypt and into the desert.

For both of these interpretations, the subsequent appearance of G-d’s presence was as an act of protection. At one level, as Netziv (Haamek Davar) understands it, G-d’s presence scared the Jews into desisting from their

violent reprisals. The Mechilta D’Rabbi Yishmael, on the other hand, claims that it did not stop the Jews – it merely protected their potential victims: “Better that the pillar of cloud be struck than that Moshe and Aharon be stoned!”

The Talmud (Sotah 35a) takes a radical approach. G-d’s presence did not appear to protect the victims – G-d Himself was the target! “Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba says: This teaches that they took stones and threw them upward as if to throw them at G-d.”

In light of this, the end of Parshat Shelach is striking. There again we find the Jews stoning a person, this time successfully. After finding a person violating Shabbat by gathering wood, the Jews bring him to Moshe. After consultation with G-d, they execute him by stoning, as G-d commands. Why is this unit here?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch claims this story indicates that the Jews had achieved a level of repentance. Although they had been sentenced to death, they did not give up on G-d. Though they were on “death row”, they committed to following the Torah as they wandered through the desert. The same Jews who not long ago had attempted to kill those who represented the truth (Kalev and Yehoshua), or their Divinely appointed leaders (Moshe and Aharon), or even wanted to stone G-d Himself, now turned their energies to prosecuting those who dared to violate G-d’s will.

Rabbanit Sharon Rimon (<http://etzion.org.il/en/stick-gatherer>) argues

that the anecdote of the “stick gatherer” is placed here to highlight this point. She notes that this story is similar to that of the “blasphemer” in many ways. In both cases, a single sinner, whose punishment is unknown, is imprisoned while awaiting sentencing. Then, each is executed by stoning. However, in the story of the blasphemer, the criminal is the center of the story. His name is known. Here, however, the stick gatherer is nameless. The main characters in the story are the Jews who find him and bring him to justice. While the blasphemer is brought before Moshe, the stick gatherer is brought before the entirety of the Jewish people. The story of the blasphemer prompts a discussion of the relevant laws for the future; in the story of the stick gatherer, the focus is the one instance, and no laws are mentioned. Noting these and other details, she reaches a conclusion which builds on the ideas above. This tragic incident closes the unit of the spies to tell us that despite it all, the Jews who were destined to die in the desert still made the heroic decision to die as committed Jews.

Though this parshah may be depressing, there is comfort in this fact – that even the most rebellions of sinners can find it within themselves to renew their commitment to G-d.

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**הורשתם את הארץ וישבתם בה (במדבר לג)
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Israeli Landmark: The Negev

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

As Moshe Rabbeinu briefed the spies before they began their infamous mission, he ordered them to “go up to the Negev.” As the commentators explain, the word Negev in Tanach refers to the “south”; in this verse it means “the south of Eretz Yisrael.” However, the word Negev is used today as a proper name as well. It is used almost exclusively as the name of a large triangle area of land in the south of Israel, covering more than 13,000 square kilometers.

The Negev is mainly a desert, and for most of known history, it was devoid of human settlement. Even when the young state of Israel was born and desperately needed land to settle the more than one million Jews returning to the land of their ancestors, the Negev was mostly overlooked. What could be done with such a dry and seemingly barren area?

David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, dismissed these doubts.

Drawing on the prophecies of Yechezkel and other prophets, he called for the cultivation of the Negev. He strongly believed that the Negev represented an opportunity not present in any other part of the land. Here you have great swaths of land, completely empty from men; in the Negev a route can be created to connect the Mediterranean and the Red sea. Most importantly, this is the place where the true essence of the pioneer, “to conquer nature, take control of its treasures, penetrate its secrets, and adapt it to human needs” can be expressed. By that, he added, man becomes “a partner with G-d in creation.”

In 1953, Ben Gurion decided to act as a personal example, and, along with his wife, moved to the Negev, settling in a small kibbutz named “S'de Boker.” This act served indeed to push for further development of the Negev. Following it came the establishment of the S'de Boker *Midrasha* (educational

institution) and later Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva.

Back in the time of the spies, seeing the Negev did not cause them to appreciate the land G-d had given them; instead, they rebelled, denouncing the land as one that “eats its inhabitants.” Today, while the Negev is blooming as never before, with the beautiful cities of Beer Sheva, Arad and Yerucham, we are still waiting the full realization of the words of the prophet: “G-d shall make its desert like a paradise and its wasteland like the garden of the Lord; joy and happiness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and a voice of song.” (Yeshayah 51:3)

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The Zionist Idea: Mandatory Redemption?

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Moshe promised that when we repent, “Hashem will restore your captives, will have mercy upon you, and will gather you from all of the nations where Hashem has scattered you. If you are scattered to the edges of the heavens, from there Hashem your G-d will collect you, and from there He will take you, etc.” (Devarim 30:3-5) This vision of *kibbutz galuyot*, a gathering of exiles in our land, is reiterated repeatedly in Tanach, as in, “A great shofar will be blown, and those lost in Assyria will come, and those who had been scattered in the land of Egypt, and they shall bow to G-d on the holy mountain, in Jerusalem.” (Yeshayah 27:13)

Our prophets and sages understood that this return to Israel would include every Jew. Yeshayah predicted, “No one will be left behind.” (ibid. 40:26) The Talmud declared that the synagogues and study halls of the exile are only consecrated conditionally, because with the arrival of Mashiach they will fly to Israel. (Megilah 29a) But could a Jew opt to remain in the Diaspora? The answer may depend on how we understand the Diaspora experience.

One could read Diaspora as banishment from the land due to sin, as predicted in the Torah on multiple occasions. (cf. Vayikra 26:33, Devarim 11:17 and 28:21) If so, then the return from exile is simply relief from punishment, and not a duty.

One could also view Diaspora as disqualification from residency in Israel; those who are impure are exiled from the land, as stated regarding the original Canaanite tribes in Vayikra 18:25-27. Within this view, too, the restoration of purity does not mandate that one return to the land.

But a third view of exile presents a different picture. When Hashem brought Avraham and Sarah to Israel, it was to “Be a blessing.” (Bereishit 12:2) This is an imperative, obligating us to issue blessing to the nations around us; Yeshayah framed the mission as becoming “a light for the nations.” (Rashi ibid.) We fulfilled this mission at the height of King Solomon's reign (Melachim I 10), but it fell apart, and we were exiled to spread blessing as individuals. As the Talmud teaches, “Israel was exiled among the nations only so that converts would join them.” (Pesachim 87b) That which we could no longer do as a society, we could still do as individuals via kiddush Hashem.

Within this view, when we achieve our national return it will be to again spread blessing as a nation. As Yeshayah said, “Many nations will set forth, saying, ‘Let us go ascend to the mountain of G-d, to the house of the G-d of Yaakov, and He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths, for Torah shall go forth from Zion, and the word of G-d from Jerusalem.’” (Yeshayah 2; Michah 4)

Within this last approach, participating in the national return is not optional; all of us are needed at home, representing all walks of life, personalities, traits and trades. We will not be able to leave anyone in exile. When Mashiach's shofar sounds – or better, *before* Mashiach's shofar sounds – we will rally to that call and initiate blessing for all humanity.

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Biography
Rabbi Yisrael Lipschitz
Russell Levy

Rabbi Yisrael Lipschitz was born in 1782 in Posen, where his father, Rabbi Gedaliah Lipschitz, was the Chief Rabbi. He entered the rabbinate as well, serving as the Chief Rabbi of Dessau and then Danzig, both part of the nascent Prussian Empire.

Rabbi Lipschitz had a great deal of contact with modern science and dealt with apparent conflicts between Judaism and new scientific theories. In his book of homiletics, *Or haChaim*, a transcription of a sermon he delivered in 1842, Rabbi Lipschitz addressed the possibility that the universe might be more than 6,000 years old. This thought was based on modern advances in geological stratigraphy and fossil discoveries. (Charles Lyell's groundbreaking book on geology, *Principles of Geology*, was published in 1830 and translated to German shortly thereafter; scientists began searching for dinosaur fossils in earnest in 1815, and the term "dinosaur" was coined in 1842.) Rabbi Lipschitz also wrote about evolution, describing how the traits endowed in the first donkey were expressed in its descendant, the donkey of Bilaam.

Rabbi Lipschitz was known to lead an ascetic life, often fasting for three-day stints. He wrote extensively. His most celebrated work is his commentary on the mishnah, *Tiferet Yisrael*. Also identified as *Mishnayot Yachin uBoaz*, this commentary is subdivided into two parts: *Yachin*, which is a more general commentary, and *Boaz*, which is more analytic. (See *Melachim I* 7:21 for the origin of the names *Yachin* and *Boaz*.) This commentary also includes several lengthy introductions which cover various halachic topics such as the fundamentals of the laws of Shabbat, an analysis of the clothing of the kohanim, and the laws of mourning. Rabbi Lipschitz also wrote *Shevilei haRakia* on astronomy, commentaries to *Shulchan Aruch* and *Mishneh Torah*, and many responsa.

Rabbi Lipschitz passed away on September 19, 1860. Among his children was Rabbi Baruch Isaac Lipschitz who followed in his father's footsteps and served as a rabbi in several German communities. Former Beit Midrash *Zichron Dov* fellow Rabbi Meir Lipschitz is also a descendant.

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Torah and Translation
A Valid Techelet Substitute?
R' Yisrael Lipschitz, *Klalei Bigdei Kodosh shel Kehunah*
Translated by Adam Friedmann

בענין תכלת יש לי ספק גדול. כי ידוע שהוא צבע (בלויה), ורגילין לומר שאין לנו צבע תכלת כי אם הנצבע בדם חלזון דוקא, וכך כ' רש"י ריש פ' תרומה וכך כ' רמ"ל (בפ"ח מכלי מקדש הי"ג), שתכלת שנזכר בכל מקום הוא הנצבע מדם חלזון...

הדבר שאני מסופק בו הוא אם באמת צריך לתכלת חלזון דוקא... לפע"ד אי אפשר לומר כן, דשם בהל' ציצית ממקומו הוא מוכרע שהרמב"ם מחלק בין הדבקים, שכתב "תכלת האמור בכל מקום וכו' תכלת שבציצית צריך שתהיה צביעה שעומדת ביפיה ולא תשתנה, ואם צבעו צביעה אחרת, אף שהוא כעין הרקיע, פסול לציצית, עכ"ל. הנה מ"ש שעומדת ביפיה, היינו צבע שנעשה מדם חלזון, כמ"ש בש"ס, דרק חלזון יש לו מדה זו...

הכלל העולה דבין בציצית ובין בבגדי הכונה א"צ חלזון דוקא אבל צריך בשניהן שיהיה מראה (היממלבלויה) שאינו משתנה מיפיו ע"י בדיקה שהזכיר הש"ס. רק דאפ"ה אין נוהגין בתכלת בציצית מדאין אנו בקיאים באותן סממנין שהזכיר הש"ס...

ועתה בא וראה כמה גדולים דברי חז"ל, שחקרתי אצל הצובעים היותר מפליאין במלאכתן, ואמרו לי שאין בנמצא (לעבהאפטעס בלויה) שיהיה ג"כ בת קיום (דויערהאפט). הרי דב' מדות הנכללים במלות תכלת, דהיינו היופי והקיום, אינן בנמצא בשום צבע (בלויה), ורק דם חלזון יש בו ב' מדות הללו, והוא שנאבד ממנו.

Regarding the techelet, I have great uncertainty. For it is known that it is the colour "blue", and we generally say that there is no valid techelet dye except that which is coloured specifically with the blood of the *chilazon*. This is what Rashi writes at the beginning of Parshat Terumah, and so writes the *Mishneh L'Melech* (Laws of the Utensils of the Temple 8:13), that the techelet which is mentioned everywhere is the one dyed from the blood of the *chilazon*...

The thing which I am uncertain about, is if techelet really requires specifically the *chilazon*... In my humble opinion it is impossible to say this, because there in the laws of Tzitzit [of the Rambam] from it's placement [in the context of the Rambam's discussion] it is obvious that the Rambam differentiates between two inter-related concepts. Because he writes, "The techelet which is mentioned everywhere etc." [and he later writes] "The techelet of the tzitzit has to be a dye which retains its luster and does not change, and if a different dye was used, even if it is the colour of the sky, it is not suitable for tzitzit." Behold that which he writes that it retains its luster is [why he thinks we need] dye which is made from the blood of the *chilazon*, as the Talmud says, since only the *chilazon* [dye] has this quality...

The rule which emerges is that both for tzitzit and for the clothing of the kohanim we do not require a *chilazon* specifically. Rather, for both things we require something that has the colour "sky blue" which doesn't lose its luster even when subjected to the [chemical] test [to cause the dye to fade] mentioned in the Talmud. However, we nevertheless do not put techelet on our tzitzit since we are not expert in those chemicals which the Talmud mentions...

And now come and see how great the words of our Sages are, because I have investigated with the greatest dyers, and they have told me that there is no blue dye which is also fast. Behold that the two qualities which are required for the techelet, i.e. the colour and fastness, are not found in any blue dye except the blood of the *chilazon*, and this is what is lost to us.

[Translator's Question: Since the time of writing in the early 19th century, we have discovered many blue dyes which are resistant to even the most extreme chemicals (like bleach). In Rabbi Lipschitz's view, would these qualify to fulfill the mitzvah of techelet?]

The Torah presents two separate mitzvot regarding removal of chametz for Pesach. One mitzvah is to eliminate chametz we find before Pesach (Shemot 12:15 as explained in Pesachim 5a), and the other is to make sure we do not own any chametz throughout Pesach (Shemot 12:19 and Pesachim ibid.). Both of these mitzvot remind us of the miracles Hashem performed for us in removing us from Egypt.

We fulfill the mitzvah of eliminating chametz when we burn it before the deadline on the 14th of Nisan, and this limitation is consistent with the biblical text as well. However, some contend that the mitzvah of destroying

chametz continues after the deadline. Rabbi Zerachyah haLevi (Baal haMaor to Pesachim 3a, supported in Sdei Chemed *mem* 77:26) argued that one who keeps chametz until after the deadline, and then eats it before Pesach, fulfills the mitzvah of eliminating chametz even though he has kept chametz illegally. Rabbi Aryeh Leib Ginsburg (Shaagat Aryeh 82) even argued that the mitzvah of eliminating chametz continues all through Pesach.

To be continued...

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Weekly Highlights: June 9 – June 15 / 26 Sivan – 2 Tammuz
Some of our classes are going on summer hiatus, but opportunities remain!

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת June 9				
After Hashkamah	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
6:00 PM	R' Jonathan Ziring	The Mitzvot After the Meraglim	BAYT	Women
Before Avot	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	Rabbi's Classroom
After minchah	R' Jonathan Ziring	Topic TBD	BAYT	Simcha Suite
Sun. June 10				
8:45 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Responsa	BAYT	Not this week
11:00 AM	Adam Friedmann R' Jonathan Ziring	Winery Tour & Tasting, Shiurim, Dairy Lunch	Tzafona Wines	Fee: \$50 <i>info@torontotorah.com</i>
Mon. June 11				
10:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Are Jews Superstitious? Week 2: Dybbuks	Beth Tikvah	
8:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Psak of Israel's Chief Rabbis 2 Rabbi Avraham Shapira	Shomrai Shabbos	Third Floor; For men
Tues. June 12				
10:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Mind Games: How Our Minds Trick Us	Adath Israel	Women; there is a fee <i>info@adathisrael.com</i>
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Nechemiah: Jerusalem	Shaarei Shomayim	
7:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yehoshua	129 Theodore Pl.	On Hiatus
Wed. June 13 Rosh Chodesh Tammuz				
2:30 PM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Exploring Bamidbar	32 Timberlane Ave.	For Women
8:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Contemporary Issues	Shaarei Tefillah	
8:00 PM	Yaron Perez	הפרשה ואני	Shaarei Shomayim	
Thu. June 14 Rosh Chodesh Tammuz				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Book of Shemuel	49 Michael Ct.	
Fri. June 15				
10:30 AM	Rav Yosef Carmel	Modern Muktzeh	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

For University Men, at Yeshivat Or Chaim
10:00 AM Sunday, Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, Gemara Beitzah—Not this week
11:00 AM Sunday, Contemporary Halachah—Not this week
8:30 AM Monday, Rabbi Jonathan Ziring, Orot
8:30 AM Friday, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, The Book of Yeshayah
For University Women, at Ulpanat Orot—On Summer Hiatus