

Change Your Garments And You Will Change Who You Are

The Haftora for parshas Shelach tells about the spies Yehoshua (Joshua) sent to Yericho (Jericho), to do espionage in the land of Canaan.¹

Yehoshua sent two spies to Yericho, they came to the home of a woman who was a zona named Rachav. Rashi explains that the word zona here means an innkeeper who sold food, like the word mazon (others translate the word literally as a prostitute). They were spotted entering her home, and the king sent messengers to get them. Rachav hid them on the roof and told the messengers that the two men had left. She suggested that they go after them, which they did immediately, thereby saving the lives of the two spies. She told them, "I know that Hashem has given the land to you, and that the dread of you has fallen upon us, and all the inhabitants of the land have melted away because of you."² She asked them to spare her family when they invade, and they gave her their word. As a sign, they told her to put a red string in her window and everyone in her home will be spared. She lowered them down a rope out her window which was built into the city's wall and suggested that they hide in the mountains for three days, until the search party returns. They took her advice and hid for three days. They then returned to Yehoshua and informed him of their findings.

The connection to the parsha is that parshas Shelach tells about the men Moshe sent to check out Canaan.

However, this brings up some questions, the Haftora is meant to resemble the parsha, but the Haftora is very different and in some ways completely the opposite of the parsha.

First, the story of the twelve men that Moshe sent, ends to the detriment of the Jewish people, the entire generation was punished to die in the desert,

not to enter the Holy Land. Whereas only good came out of Yehoshua's spies.

Second, Hashem didn't command Moshe to send his men, He said, "Send for yourself men."³ In other words, if you want to send them, go ahead. As far as Hashem was concerned it was unnecessary. However, it is obvious that Yehoshua was commanded by Hashem to send the spies, because he lived through the fiasco with Moshe's spies, he certainly wouldn't have risked repeating that, unless he had a direct command from Hashem to send spies.

Third by Moshe's spies Hashem says, "Send for yourself men and they should inspect the land of Canaan."⁴ They are called "men," and they are told to "inspect" the land, not to spy or search out the land, as spies. Whereas Yehoshua's spies were called "men who were spies."⁵ it says that word got to the king that two men came "to search out the land,"⁶ and it says that the king sent messengers to Rachav to capture the men, because "they came to search out the entire land."⁷

Fourth, Moshe sent 12 men, while Yehoshua only sent two.

Fifth, whereas Yehoshua's spies were sent in total secrecy as is the normal way in espionage, Moshe's spies were not a secret at all. Actually it was known by all the Jewish people that each tribe had a representative in the group. When they toured Canaan, they made no effort to conceal themselves, they even traveled as a conspicuous group, they didn't split up and secretly check out the different regions of the land.

Sixth, Moshe's men went all over Israel, while Yehoshua's spies went only to Yericho, and in Yericho itself, only to the home of Rachav.

³ Numbers 13:2, and Rashi.

⁴ Numbers 13:2.

⁵ Joshua 2:1.

⁶ Joshua 2:2.

⁷ Joshua 2:3.

¹ Joshua 2:1-24.

² Joshua 2:9.

With all these inconsistencies, it is clear that the Haftora is different than the parsha. So why do we read this Haftora with parshas Shelach?

Another question. Every story in the Tanach has an eternal lesson for us. What is the lesson from the stories of the spies?

There are two reasons to send people to check out a country before invading it. One reason is to seek out the best way of invading it, by finding its weak points, scouting passageways for entry and escape, and to gather information about the people they will be fighting, their abilities, demeanor, etc.

The other reason is not tactical, but rather to see how good the land is. What are its natural resources and positive qualities? This information is needed to boost the morale of the people who will be invading.

In Moshe's case, Hashem was leading them and He was going to deliver Canaan into their hands. Tactical espionage wasn't necessary because they knew that they were going to win. Moshe wanted to send his spies so that the people would hear how good the land was and that would generate a great joy amongst the nation to want to go up to the land. For this reason it was done openly and every tribe needed to have a representative, because they had to hear from their own leader how good it was. Therefore all twelve men had to tour the whole country, to see that it was all good, because at that point in time the tribes didn't know where in the land they would be settling. They weren't really spies at all, it wasn't a mission to seek out the best way of capturing the land, it was more of a tour of the land, to see the qualities of the land Hashem was giving us.

Even though ultimately the spies scared the people and weakened their resolve to go up and capture the land, they did accomplish the mission of telling them how good the land was. Even though they were punished not to enter the land, they had heard how good it was, and that stayed with them.

Yehoshua didn't need to get the people excited about the land, Moshe's spies already accomplished that. His spies were sent to gather information, so it was done in total secrecy and only two people were sent to be as inconspicuous as possible. Because even though Hashem would be with them, it wasn't the same as in the time of Moshe, they would have to fight real battles, it wouldn't be handed to them. When they came to Rachav, she provided them with all the information they needed, that the Canaanites were afraid and their morale was down. It was unnecessary for them to continue.⁸

Although the stories don't parallel each other, Yehoshua's spies were the continuation and the completion of Moshe's spies. The ultimate goal of both, was to conquer the land. The first group got the Jewish people excited about the land, and the second got the information that lead to the conquering of the land.⁹

Rashi¹⁰ tells us that the two spies that went to Yericho, were Calev and Pinchas. Calev together with Yehoshua were from the original group of spies that Moshe sent. Calev didn't join the 10 spies who gave a bad report, Yehoshua knew that he could be trusted. Being the leader of the tribe of Yehuda, he represented all 12 tribes.

The question is, why did he send Pinchas? Pinchas was a Kohen from the tribe of Levi, which wasn't counted as one of the 12 tribes, they also didn't go into battle and they didn't receive a portion of the land. They were given over to serve Hashem, and to teach and guide the Jewish people in the ways of Hashem, spiritual pursuits, that was their lot.

Yehoshua was thinking long term. Although right now Levi wasn't going to receive a portion in the land, in the future, when Moshiach comes they will. The Talmud says, "In the future the land of Israel will be divided into 13 tribes,"¹¹ Levi will also have a part of the land. This is because, as the Rambam

⁸ Torahs Menachem Hisvaduyos 5751c pp. 352-358.

⁹ Torahs Menachem Hisvaduyos 5751c pp. 362-363.

¹⁰ Rashi to Joshua 2:4, from Midrash Tanchuma.

¹¹ Baba Basra 122a.

says, "In those days there will be more knowledge, wisdom and truth,"¹² so much so, that "there will be no involvement in the whole world, but to know Hashem..., as it says,¹³ 'The world will be full of the knowledge of Hashem, just as the water covers the sea.'"¹⁴ So the tribe of Levi won't be busy teaching and guiding, having land won't take away from their holy work, therefore they will also have a part of the land. This is why Pinchas, from the tribe of Levi was included.¹⁵

We are left with one question. What is the eternal message for us in the stories of the spies?

To answer this question, please let me take you to a deeper place.

We each have a Neshama (a G-dly soul), which comes into our bodies, and into our animal souls, similar to the spies coming into the land of Canaan. The ultimate goal is to conquer the land and make it holy, to turn it into Eretz Yisrael. Similarly, we are meant to affect the body and the animal soul which naturally crave the pleasures of the world, and make them holy, to do Hashem's will.

There are two ways to do this, symbolized by the two sets of spies. In Moshe's time, the Jewish people were at a very high level, they were Tzadikim. Their job was to inspect the entire land and the seven nations that lived there. The seven nations symbolize the seven emotional attributes that we each have. The idea here is to inspect one's emotional makeup and if need be, change his attributes to align with Hashem's will. The problem is that the average person doesn't have control over his emotions and certainly doesn't have the ability to change them, because they are who he is, and it takes incredible power to make that kind of change. A Tzadik has that power, but most of us are not at that level, how can we make our bodies holy?

That is where Yehoshua's spies come in. In Yehoshua's time, they weren't at the level of Tzadikim. They only went to Yericho, which is the entryway to the land of Israel, change the Yericho and eventually you conquer the entire land. Yericho is like the word rayach, an aroma, in Kabbalistic teaching aroma refers to the garments of the soul, just as your aroma surrounds you, so do your garments surround you. You may not be able to change your emotional makeup of your animal soul, but you have the power to change its garments. Just as a garment is an expression of who you are, the garments of the soul, is how it expresses itself. The soul has three ways to express itself, thought, speech and action. Speech and action are easier to control than your thoughts, but you can always choose to think about something else. Change the garments and eventually, with Hashem's help, you will be able to change your emotional makeup as well.¹⁶

Rachav changed and became a great woman, she converted, married Yehoshua and 8 of her descendants were prophets, Neriah, Baruch, Sheraiah, Machseiah, Yirmyah, Chilkiah, Chanamel and Shalum, they were all Kohanim, Chulda the prophetess was her descendant as well. She is named as one of the four most beautiful women who ever lived, together with Sarah, Avigayil, and Esther.¹⁷

May we merit the completion of our Holy Land, when Hashem will add the land of three more nations, with the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

Dedicated to the memory of Bubby Friedman, who passed away this week. I grew up across the street from her. She was a special woman who brought up an amazing family of Shluchim and Shluchos, great singers, and good and kind people. I know how much she was loved, may the entire extended Friedman family be consoled.

¹² Rambam, Laws of Teshuva end of chapter 9.

¹³ Isaiah 11:9.

¹⁴ Rambam end of Laws of Kings. This is how he ends his book.

¹⁵ Torahs Menachem Hisvaduyos 5751c pp. 362-363.

¹⁶ Maamar Vayishlach Yehoshua 5736. See also Maamar Vayishlach Yehoshua 5742.

¹⁷ Meggila 14b-15a.