

# Sh'lach

37th of the 54 sedras;  
4th of 10 in Bamidbar

Written on 198 lines, ranks 25th

10 Parshiyot; 7 open, 3 closed

119 p'sukim, ranks 21, 6th / Bamidbar

1540 words, ranks 27, 5th / Bamidbar

5820 letters, ranks 27, 4th / Bamidbar

Sh'lach has shorter than average p'sukim, which explains the drop in rank for words and letters, yet the rise in rank within Bamidbar indicates that there are sedras with even shorter p'sukim.

## MITZVOT

3 mitzvot - 2 positives -  
Challah & Tzitzit,  
and 1 prohibition, not to follow the  
temptations of your heart and eyes.

As we point out often, the distribution of mitzvot in the Torah is very uneven. With only 3 mitzvot, there are 25 sedras with fewer mitzvot than Sh'lach and 26 with more. 3 is the median number of mitzvot per sedra in the Torah. T'ruma and Chukat also have 3 mitzvot each.

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

## Kohen - First Aliya 20 p'sukim - 13:1-20

[P> 13:1 (43)] G-d tells Moshe to send "people" to "scout out" the Land. ("People" is in quotes because commentaries point to the word ANASHIM and say that it means people of high calibre and repute - except that we know how it turns out...) The emphasis in the wording of the pasuk is on Moshe being the one sending the Meraglim, not at G-d's command nor by His "desire".

The representatives of each tribe are named and the Torah, further testifies to the high caliber of each man.

**SDT** Back in Bamidbar, when the Tribal leaders were named, Efrayim and Menashe were identified as the sons of Yosef - within the same pasuk. Here, only Menashe is identified with Yosef, and Efrayim's scout, Yehoshua, is listed 3 p'sukim earlier, without reference to his father. Commentaries note that Yosef had been involved in "negative reports" (against his brothers), as was the scout of Menashe involved in negative reports on the Land. Yehoshua remained clear of the taint of DIBA RA'A and is therefore not mentioned together with Yosef, in this context.

(It is interesting to note that the word immediately before 'for the tribe of Efrayim...' is YOSEF, in this case, the

father of Yig'al, the scout for Yissachar. Nonetheless, it is interesting that Efrayim is juxtaposed to a different Yosef even though he is 'distanced' from his own father's name.)

And Moshe called Hoshea bin Nun, Yehoshua.

**SDT** Rashi says that by adding a YUD to Hoshea's name, he was giving him a bracha that he should be saved from the group attitude of the other Meraglim. Question: MIMA NAFSHACH (whichever way you want to look at things) - Why did Moshe not "bless" the others scouts similarly? And why would Yehoshua need a bracha when Kalev apparently did not?

Whether a Scout will come back with the proper attitude or not was based on each individual's personality, perceptions, and conclusions. That was up to each of the 12 individuals. That's not why Moshe gave a special bracha to Yehoshua. Moshe had a separate fear concerning Yehoshua. He could imagine Yehoshua joining the ten Meraglim in discouraging the People from entering the Land so that Moshe's life would be prolonged. Eldad and Meidad had prophesied that Moshe would die and Yehoshua would lead the people into the Land, Yehoshua heard that and was quite agitated. Moshe's bracha to Yehoshua was to keep Yehoshua honest, so to speak, so that he would not join the "evil advice" for any reason, even one to benefit Moshe himself.

Moshe gives the scouts instructions and an itinerary, hoping that they will

return with an encouraging report for Bnei Yisrael. It was the time of the ripening of the grapes, Bikurei Anavim.

## **Levi** - Second Aliya 20 p'sukim - 13:21-14:7

The Torah describes the 40-day "tour" of the scouts. When they returned, they reported to the People about the truly beautiful land to which they had been sent. They showed the samples of the fruits they brought back with them. They described the apparent strength of the inhabitants (in an attempt to scare the people). And they mentioned Amalek and other nations (knowing it would have a discouraging effect).

Kalev silenced the people and told them that they should go to the Land; "we can do it!". The other ten scouts objected and spoke further against the Land, causing wide-spread panic among the people. Moshe, Aharon, Kalev, and Yehoshua are greatly troubled by the words of the Meraglim and by the reaction of the people. Kalev and Yehoshua proclaim the goodness of the Land.

**SDT**...and we were in our eyes like grasshoppers (compared to the giants of Canaan) and so we appeared to them. The Kotzker Rebbe and others define two components of the Sin of the Spies from this part of the pasuk. First, that we saw ourselves as small and insignificant, compared with the nations in Eretz Yisrael. Second, that we were concerned about how others perceived us. With G-d obviously on our side (we knew what happened to

Egypt and we witnessed so many miracles performed on our behalf), we should not have viewed ourselves that way. And, how others perceive us is their problem, not ours. (In fact, it should often be an asset for us.) Sadly, each of these attitude problems exists in our own time.

- Notice how the first time the Meraglim spoke to the people, they did not say that we shouldn't go into Eretz Yisrael. They "just" described some of the difficulties we would face and apparently hoped that their report would scare off the people. After Kalev took the microphone, so to speak, and gave a brief but enthusiastic "Aliya pep-talk", the Meraglim dropped the subtle approach and spoke out openly against going into Eretz Yisrael. This is what the Torah described as DIBA AL HA'ARETZ, Lashon HaRa against the Land.

It might be said that people who tell other Jews about terror attacks and other difficulties that we face in Israel are "guilty" of "first-stage" Meraglim-talk. Those who add "you gotta be crazy to live there" or words to that effect, are repeating and perpetuating what is maybe the greatest communal sin in the history of the Jewish People. The sin of the Meraglim created the blackest day on our calendar, Tish'a b'Av. The destructions of the two Batei Mikdash and the various causes of the CHURBAN were "merely" add-ons to Tish'a b'Av. When we totally repudiate - by action, not just by word - the Sin of the Spies, and embrace - by action, not just by word - the righteous behavior of Kalev and Yehoshua, then we can hope

for the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zecharya that will see Tish'a b'Av and the other Churban-related fasts become Yamim Tovim.

## **Shlishi** - Third Aliya 18 p'sukim - 14:8-25

"If G-d wants us to go there, then we will obviously be able to prevail. Just don't rebel against Him." The people wanted to stone Kalev and Yehoshua for those words.

**And sadly, there are many Jews today who still don't hear - or want to hear Kalev's words.**

[P> 14:11 (15)] G-d is "angered" by the people and "suggests" to Moshe that He will destroy them. Moshe argues on behalf of the people. His (main) argument is that other nations will say that G-d did not have the ability to bring Bnei Yisrael into K'na'an, so He killed them in the wilderness. This would be a Chilul HaShem. Moshe then invokes a modified version of the Divine Attributes and pleads for forgiveness for the people. (Part of Moshe's words at this point have been incorporated into our davening.) G-d agrees to Moshe's pleas. (G-d's response to Moshe also becomes part of the Yom Kippur davening.) G-d declares that this is the tenth time that the People have "tested" His patience (so to speak). He promises that the men of this generation will not enter the Land - except Kalev (and Yehoshua).

The People are told that Amalek and the Canaanites occupy the valley and that they (the People of Israel) will

have to divert towards the Midbar.

## Compare & Learn

Towards the end of last week's sedra, we have the episode of Miriam's talking about Moshe and her punishment for her relatively mild transgression of LASHON HARA. Commentaries point out the juxtaposition of the episode of the spies.

There is more to this than "simply" two examples of Lashon HaRa, one about a person and one about Eretz Yisrael. There are important elements and details to be learned one from the other.

For example, it is not just the speaker of Lashon HaRa that transgresses. Those who listen to LH passively, without objecting, those who accept the LH as truth - they too transgress. The Sin of the Spies was not restricted to 10 people. Thousands of those who heard what was said and accepted it, and panicked because of it, they too were guilty. And they were punished, as we know.

**Translate this into our time.** It is not enough for one to refrain from bad-mouthing Eretz Yisrael, one cannot stand by idly when others do it. Kalev jumped up as soon as he heard what the Meraglim said. He did his best to repudiate the words of the Meraglim and then made his own impassioned pitch for Aliya.

We must not "put down" Israel, its people, life here, etc. We must object when others do. And one should avoid

saying something negative even in a joke. (Just as, "I was only joking" does not mitigate Lashon HaRa about another person.)

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 27 p'sukim - 14:26-15:7

**[P> 14:26 (20)]** The Torah elaborates upon the devastating pronouncement by G-d. The People shall roam in the Midbar for a number of years equal to the number of days of the spies' trip.

**Clarification:** The Sin of the Spies occurred on Tish'a b'Av 2449, more than a year out of Egypt. The total time in the Midbar from Exodus to entry into the Eretz Yisrael is 40 years (less five days). So the punishment is really for less than 39 years, not 40. But look at things this way: The Sin of the Spies was the culmination of the "angering" of G-d. We can say that it began back at the Sin of the Golden Calf (or even before that - we "complained" when we were hardly out of Egypt). We might say that the 40-year punishment is retro-active to include Cheit HaEigel (or earlier).

The people deeply regret their behavior and NOW decide to enter the Land immediately. Moshe warns them not to, because G-d no longer wants them to do so (at this point). Some of the people went anyway - without the protection of the Aron, so to speak - and are defeated and repelled by Amalek and K'na'an.

**[P> 15:1 (16)]** The Torah next sets down the details of the flour and oil offering and libation of wine that are

to accompany most korbanot.

It is important to note the context of these laws. Right after being told that the older generation (males) will not enter the Land, G-d comforts the people by teaching procedures that will apply in Eretz Yisrael, specifically mitzvot that are to be "pleasing to G-d" (and even though they are commanded elsewhere). It is as if G-d says, "Don't be too dismayed; your children will live in Eretz Yisrael and will serve Me in the Beit HaMikdash" in this special way.

Note also that the Aliya-break comes in mid-topic, leaving us, at the break, to ponder and savor the fact that we will yet bring about **רִיחַ נִיחַח לַה'**.

## **Chamishi** 5th Aliya 9 p'sukim - 15:8-16

The details of the MINCHA & NESECH are completed in this portion, finishing with a reiteration and emphasis on the equality of Torah law for all Jews.

**Furthermore...** It seems obvious that this area of mitzva was purposely put here in the aftermath of the Sin of the Spies. There are at least two other places in the Torah where the topic is presented, where the mitzva is counted, and where it fits well in the context. It seems superfluous here except as a message for the aftermath of the Meraglim. Note also, that it is not merely a mitzva that will apply in Eretz Yisrael, but one that is part of the Beit HaMikdash service.

## **Shishi** - Sixth Aliya 10 p'sukim - 15:17-26

[P> 15:17 (5)] Mitzva of Challa is presented [385, A133 15:20].

## **MitzvaWatch**

Two major aspects of this precious mitzva are:

It is performed with THE essential food of humans - as in, Bread is the staff of life. This elevates the physical necessity of food to a spiritual level.

Which, by the way, fits the idea of "Man does not live by bread alone." This idea, presented in the beginning of Parshat Eikev, referred to the Manna as that which indicated to the People that it is "by the mouth of G-d, that man lives." That being so during the years of wandering in the Midbar, the concept continues in perpetuity via the mitzva of CHALLA and the other mitzvot associated with bringing bread to our tables, as well as washing for bread, HaMotzi, Birkat HaMazon... and more.

Secondly, the fact that we are to give Challah to a Kohen - specifically after most of the work has been done, meaning that we give Challa from ready-to-pop-into-the-oven dough and not the raw produce, as with other gifts to the Kohen - indicates that it is not merely the gift that is significant, but the service to the Kohen that we perform that is important as well.

Challah is one of the mitzvot that our

Sages have kept active by rabbinic decree since the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, so that its practice and lessons should not be lost to us. Furthermore, Challah is rabbinically required in Chutz LaAretz, although the Torah introduces the mitzva with, "with your coming to the Land". This too helps keep "Torat Challa" alive among the Jewish People and show us how very special this mitzva is.

**[S> 15:22 (5)]** Next the Torah presents the details of the Chatat (sin offering) of the community (in cases where the leaders of the community inadvertently misled the people (in Avoda Zara related matters.) Here again it seems obvious that this topic is brought up because of the Sin of the Spies. This mitzva is not counted here, but it certainly conveys G-d's attitude (so to speak) about Cheit HaMeraglim. We recognize that sometimes our leaders must bear the responsibility of leading us astray (but not always - often we must be accountable and not claim that we were just following orders). The ideas (and text) here are part of Yom Kippur davening.

## **Sh'VII** Seventh Aliya 15 p'sukim - 15:27-41

**[S> 15:27 (5)]** On the other hand, many times each individual must be accountable for his own actions; we cannot always blame our leaders. [The fits, as we mentioned before, the culpability - albeit different - of the population in addition to the Meraglim themselves.] The Torah in this portion discusses the Chatat of the individual. These offerings are appropriate only

for inadvertent violation; intentional violation (idolatry is implied) is punishable by KAREIT (excision, being cut off...), and is atoneable by other methods.

Following Cheit HaMeraglim and preceding the episode of the wood-gatherer, the Torah presents us with both types of Chata'ot - communal and individual. These topics are dealt with (and counted among Taryag) elsewhere. Again, we are seeing (probably) an example of repeating something in a specific context or juxtaposition to a story in order to make a point and deliver an important message to us.

**[P> 15:32 (3)]** The Torah next tells us of the wood-gatherer (Tradition identifies him as Tz'lofchad) who was locked up pending details from G-d as to how a public desecrator of Shabbat is to be executed. (That it is a capital offense was already known.)

**[S> 15:35 (2)]** G-d's command was to stone the violator. And so it was done.

**[P> 15:37 (5)]** The final portion of the sedra is the third passage of the Sh'ma - the portion of Tzitzit. It contains the mitzva to put Tzitzit on the corners of a four-corner garment **[386,A14 15:38]** and that one of the strings of each corner should be dyed t'cheilet, the special blue dye. (Some say half a string, which becomes one of 8; some say one string, which becomes 2 of 8; and some say 2 of the 4 strings, which become 4 of 8 when tied.)

Our Sages went out of their way to involve us in the mitzva of Tzitzit - with Talit Gadol and Talit Katan - although

we could technically not be required to fulfill this mitzva because our regular clothing (today) does not usually have four corners. Perhaps they did so because Tzitzit is not merely a mitzva that we "perform", it is a mitzva that we wear. It is an integral part of our everyday lives. It is part of our Jewish uniform (for males). What a shame to be without this inspirational mitzva because the style of clothing has changed and we no longer wear 4-cornered garments.

**To clarify:** If a man wears a four-cornered garment, he is required by Torah law to tie tzitzit on the corners - however, the Sages require us to wear a four-cornered garment in order to be obligated to fulfill the mitzva of Tzitzit. In other words, "officially", TZITZIT is a MITZVA KIYUMIT. Our Sages changed it into a MITZVA CHIYUVIT.

Furthermore, the Torah links the mitzva of tzitzit with all the mitzvot of the Torah; tzitzit (and/or the P'til T'cheilet) serve as a reminder of the Jew's all-encompassing commitment to G-d. This is followed by the warning not to follow the evil temptation of the eye (mind) or heart (emotion) [387, L47 15:39]. The Torah then reiterates the importance of belief in G-d in general, and in His having redeemed us from Egypt, in particular. Thus, the twice daily recitation of the Sh'ma constitutes the fulfillment of the mitzva to remember the Exodus "all the days of your life", in addition to its own mitzva, the saying of Sh'ma. It follows that when one recites the Sh'ma, one should have specific KAVANA at the end of the third

passage to fulfill the mitzva to remember the Exodus all the days of our lives (which, if you remember the Mishna borrowed by the Hagada - or vice versa - KOL Y'MEI CHAYECHA teaches us that the mitzva applies in the daytime and at nighttime. The Hagada uses this Mishna to explain the fact that the mitzva of Hagada is at night. But the Mishna was discussing the third passage of Sh'ma and justifying its being recited at night too, even though Tzitzit is a day mitzva.) Parshat Tzitzit is reread for the Maftir.

## Haftara 24 p'sukim - Yehoshua 2:1-24

Paralleling and contrasting with the sedra, the Haftara tells us of two other spies (Kalev and Pinchas, according to Tradition - they are not named in the text) who were sent by Yehoshua into Yericho. Rachav, who had heard of the wonders that happened to the People of Israel, protects the spies from the men who are searching for them. In exchange for her protection, Rachav receives a promise that she and her family will be spared when the Israelite army attacks the city. Tradition tells us that Rachav subsequently became a sincere convert and the wife of Yehoshua. In one case, Spies were our undoing. In the other, they served a very positive function. Ironic.

## **PROBING the PROPHETS**

Whenever discussing this week's haftara that relates the story of the spies sent by Yehoshua before the Israelite invasion of Eretz K'na'an, the first issue that comes to mind is why. Why would he have sent spies when he himself was directly involved in the terrible events that followed the story of the spies sent by Moshe Rabbeinu that we read of in this week's parsha? Why repeat the same mistake? Why risk it all, now that you are but days before entering the Promised Land?

We have previously discussed a number of differences between the two missions but perhaps the most basic difference is simply that Yehoshua's mission had a different purpose than that of Moshe. A close reading of the parsha would make us realize that the word L'RAGEIL, to spy, or the term MERAGLIM, spies, is never used in Sh'lach. The expression that repeats is that of V'YATURU or LATUR, to "tour" or pass through the land. Seemingly, this was never to be a "secret" mission - which is why these "agents" of Moshe brought back their report to the entire congregation. We never read that they had to hide from the locals - which is why Moshe didn't hesitate to send twelve men, hardly an inconspicuous group. And, significantly, the men reported the deductions they made from what they saw, but never did they speak to the local population to hear how they felt.

The haftara, on the other hand, describes a very different mission and one is tempted to suggest that the

choice of this second perek of Sefer Yehoshua as the haftara may very well have been based on the contrast between the two missions and the lesson we can derive from those differences. Yehoshua sends MERAGLIM, spies, and he sends them CHERESH, secretly. Their mission was limited to the first city the Israelites would attack after crossing the Yarden, the city of Yericho and their purpose was to report on the mood of the people based upon what they heard from the locals. These secret spies had to hide (twice) because they were being pursued by the king of Yericho and his men and they returned to deliver their report to Yehoshua alone, telling him exactly what Rachav, a resident Yericho, told them.

HaRav Yehuda Shaviv correctly points out that to "spy" (L'RAGEIL) implies more than a superficial look; it indicates an effort to uncover that which is beneath the surface. And this is precisely the difference between the mission undertaken in the haftara and that which was demanded by Moshe. It is the difference between coming to conclusions based only upon what you surmise from what you see and returning with a report that is substantiated by what those who knew the situation were saying and implying. It is the difference between spying and touring.

It is the difference between success and failure.

*Probing the Prophets, weekly insights into the Haftara, is written by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler, author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)*

## Eretz Yisrael in the Haftara

by Rabbis Ethan Eisen and Tuly Weisz

### The Secret of Covert Spy Operations

Eli Cohen HY"D was a filing clerk in a Tel Aviv insurance office recruited by the Mossad in 1961. He was given a false identity as a Syrian businessman and moved to Damascus under the alias Kamel Amin Thaabet. "Our Man in Damascus" quickly rose through the ranks of Syria's political and military hierarchy and became the chief advisor to Syria's Minister of Defense. Before his capture and execution r"l, Eli Cohen provided Israel with vital intelligence that contributed to the capture of the Golan Heights during the Six Day War.

This week's haftara (Yehoshua 2:1-24), picks up where the Chumash leaves off, with Bnei Yisrael on the cusp of entering Eretz Yisrael. Similar to the central story of Parshat Shelach, spies are sent into the land in advance of the nation's entry into Israel. However, where our parsha's expedition ends in failure, the spy mission of our haftara ends triumphantly.

As one of the original spies sent by Moshe 38 years earlier, Yehoshua knew firsthand the limitations and dangers of such a mission. Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv explains in his sefer "Bein Parsha L'Haftara", that precisely because Yehoshua was personally involved in the original delegation, he devised a very different expedition in order to arrive at a more successful outcome.

The haftara begins, "Yehoshua bin Nun secretly ["cheresh"] sent two spies ["meraglim"] from Shitim, saying, 'Go, reconnoiter the region of Yericho'" (v. 1). R' Shaviv points to this verse as containing the essential difference between the two episodes and quotes the Vilna Gaon. According to the GR"A, the word "cheresh" highlights Yehoshua's covert strategy and in the words of the Vilna Gaon, these meraglim "were sent quietly to avoid the original mistakes."

The expedition described in Bamidbar was a very public spectacle; one can almost imagine the scene of departure as full of pomp and circumstance. The twelve men were all prominent "leaders of the Children of Israel" who are listed individually by name as the heads of tribes, as opposed to the two sent by Yehoshua whose names are never mentioned.

The differences continue. The twelve scouts of Moshe returned from a long journey with enormous bounty to a very public reception: "At the end of forty days they returned from scouting the land. They went straight to Moshe and Aharon and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran, and they made their report to them and to the whole community, as they showed them the fruit of the land" (14:25,26).

Yehoshua's two spies, on the other hand, are spotted immediately and their mission is quickly aborted. They enter Yericho where they are "hidden" (v. 4) by Rachav and "covered" (v. 6)

before they manage to escape into the hills. The two men brief Yehoshua in private with an altogether startling conclusion: "They came to Yehoshua bin Nun and reported to him all that had happened to them. They said to Yehoshua, "Hashem has delivered the whole land into our power; in fact, all the inhabitants of the land are quaking before us" (v. 23, 24).

How is it that after forty days of travelling the length and breadth of Israel, Moshe's scouts report they would be unable to conquer the land, but in just a few terrifying hours Yehoshua's men come to the exact opposite conclusion?

Moshe's delegates are sent "latour et haaretz", "to search out the land" rather than to serve as covert spies. In fact, the shorash "tour" appears a dozen times to describe the mission and so "tourist" would be a better description of Moshe's twelve men than "spies"! The very fact that so many prominent leaders, whose names and faces were known to all, led the tour implies that this was no secret spy mission whatsoever, but a discovery expedition.

The successful outcome described in our haftara comes about precisely on account of the secrecy and privacy insisted upon by Yehoshua. In addition to his personal experience as one of the original scouts, perhaps Yehoshua learned the importance of secrecy from the two sets of Luchot given by Hashem. The first set was given with great fanfare, only to be destroyed. The second Luchot, however, were given

privately to Moshe - and endured. Rashi explains (Sh'mot 34:3), "Since the first Luchot were given in public with thunder and sounds, the Yetzer Hara emerged. There is nothing better than modesty."

Especially when it comes to as precious a gift as the Luchot, or Eretz Yisrael, our approach must be one of secrecy, modesty and humility.

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