

OHR NET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

REPORTING — AND DISTORTING

“We arrived at the land to which you sent us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. But — the people that dwell in the land are powerful, the cities are very greatly fortified, and we also saw there the offspring of the giant.” (13:27)

Truth is the first casualty of any war. With the tragic deaths of twenty Israeli teenagers and the serious wounding of scores more has the cynical manipulation of the head of the Palestinian Authority been unmasked.

But world opinion is as fickle as an English summer. Let us not forget that a short time ago the Los Angeles Times printed a cartoon portraying a couple of religious Jews bowing before the Wailing Wall; the rearranged stones of the wall spelled “HATE.” The caption read: “Worshipping Their God...”

And around that time, papers worldwide topped their front pages with a large AP photo of an Israeli soldier wielding a club over a bleeding man. According to the caption, the bleeding man was a “Palestinian,” but in fact it was Tuvia Grossman, an American Jew, who was on his way to the Western Wall when Arabs pulled him from the back of a taxi, stoned him and beat him. An Israeli soldier was intervening to protect him when his photo was taken.

The destruction of one of Judaism’s holy sites, Joseph’s Tomb, was barely reported. Would Israel have been treated the same if it destroyed the mosque of Al Aksa? Other barely reported stories: Arafat’s threat to declare war on Israel in a Saudi interview; the PA offering \$2,000 to families whose children become martyrs.

Huge blasts, miraculously killing no-one, are termed “non-fatal bombs” — as if no harm was intended. The Arabs who plant these “non-fatal bombs” are “freedom fighters” and “guerrillas,” never “terrorists.”

Arabs butcher two boys hiking in a cave near Tekoa and smear their blood on the wall. (One, Kobi Mandell, was the son of a colleague and friend here at Yeshivat Ohr Somayach. I can’t express what it was like to go and try to do the mitzvah of *nichum aveilim*, comforting the bereaved.)

Yet, the world compares this deliberate torture and slaying of innocent boys on a hike to the killing of Arab youth placed directly in the line of fire by their parents and teachers.

Do Arabs fear meeting Jews in a cave? Do PA “policeman” fear taking a wrong turn into an Israeli town and being lynched? Does a Palestinian mother fear that her infant’s head will come into the cross-hairs of an Israeli sniper?

No; the Israelis are fighting for their right to exist while the Arabs martyr their children as fodder for world propaganda.

Propaganda is no new invention. Propaganda goes back a long way. Right back to this week’s Torah reading: “We arrived at the Land to which you sent us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. But — the people that dwell in the Land are powerful, the cities are very greatly fortified, and we also saw there the offspring of the giant.”

“But” is a little word with a big meaning. The key word which revealed the spies’ lack of faith was “but.” With that little word, they turned their factual report into propaganda. Of course, it was their duty to report to Moshe that the people were powerful and that the towns were fortified. But... By the introduction of this superfluous qualifier, the spies gave their true colors away. They betrayed that they believed that however rich and blessed the Land might be, it was unassailable. The message was: Ordinary beings are no match for giants. Truth is the first casualty of any war.

Sources:

• Ramban; Steven Rosenberg - editor of *The Jewish Advocate*

At the insistence of *Bnei Yisrael*, and with Hashem's permission, Moshe sends 12 scouts, one from each tribe, to investigate Canaan. Anticipating trouble, Moshe changes Hoshea's name to Yehoshua, expressing a prayer that Hashem not let him fail in his mission. They return 40 days later, carrying unusually large fruit. When 10 of the 12 state that the people in Canaan are as formidable as the fruit, the men are discouraged. Calev and Yehoshua, the only two scouts still in favor of the invasion, try to bolster the people's spirit. The nation, however, decides that the Land is not worth the potentially fatal risks, and instead demands a return to Egypt. Moshe's fervent prayers save the nation from Heavenly annihilation; however, Hashem declares that they must remain in the desert for 40 years until the men who wept at the scouts' false report pass

away. A remorseful group rashly begin an invasion of the Land based on Hashem's original command. Moshe warns them not to proceed, but they ignore this and are massacred by the Amalekites and Canaanites. Hashem instructs Moshe concerning the offerings to be made when *Bnei Yisrael* will finally enter the Land. The people are commanded to remove *challah*, a gift for the *kohanim*, from their dough. The laws for an offering after an inadvertent sin, for an individual or a group, are explained. However, should someone blaspheme against Hashem and be unrepentant, he will be cut off spiritually from his people. One man is found gathering wood on public property in violation of the laws of Shabbat and he is executed. The laws of *tzitzit* are taught. We recite the section about the *tzitzit* twice a day to remind ourselves of the Exodus.

HAFTARAH

JOSHUA 2:1 - 2:24

In this *haftara*, Joshua's two spies explore the city of Jericho in preparation for the first conquest of the Promised Land. Our Sages teach that these two spies were Calev and Pinchas, two very righteous people, for Joshua wanted to avoid an outcome similar to that of the 12 spies sent by Moses, recorded in Parshat Shelach. The spies

enter Jericho as earthenware dealers and seek lodging at the inn of Rachav. When they are detected by the authorities, their hostess proves a great ally by hiding them. She tells them that the psychological war has already been won, as the inhabitants are petrified of the Israelites, having heard about the miracles G-d did for them. She sends them off safely and they in turn promise to save her and her family.

The Chidushei HaRim explains that Joshua chose clay vessels as the ware for their disguise to remind them not to stumble as had the previous spies. An earthenware vessel, unlike other vessels, does not contract spiritual defilement unless its *interior* comes in contact with the spiritually defiled. This is because — unlike metal or wood — the clay from which it is formed has no *intrinsic* worth; its *sole* significance is its form as a vessel. Spiritual impurity passes only when it contacts the important aspect of an entity; so, regarding clay vessels, unless it touches the interior, the usefulness part of the vessel, the impurity will not pass on. Joshua wished the spies to understand that a person is like an earthenware vessel: His significance lies in his duty, he has no self importance. This thought would prevent them from diverting from their assignment.

EARTHENWARE

The verse tells us that the spies entered Jericho "in secrecy." The term used for secrecy is "*cheresh*," reminiscent of the word "*cheres*" — "earthenware" — hinting that they were disguised as traveling earthenware merchants. Why specifically this disguise?

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With sorrow and grief we mourn the passing of

REBBETZIN

CHIPA BEILA WEINBERGER, *a'h*

and convey our deepest condolences to our friend, colleague and teacher

RABBI DOVID WEINBERGER, *shlit'a*

and to his entire family

May they be consoled among the mourners of Zion
 and Jerusalem and may they know of no more sorrow

THE OHR SOMAYACH FAMILY

CHILDREN OR SLAVES

“You are children of Hashem, your G-d.” (*Devarim 14:1*) Are we always termed “children of Hashem”? Rabbi Yehuda says that only when we behave like His children are we called this; otherwise, we are not called His children. Rabbi Meir disagrees, proving from a whole series of Tanach passages that we are called children of Hashem even when we misbehave.

This debate between these two sages echoes a dialogue between their teacher, Rabbi Akiva, and the Roman ruler Turnusrufus (*Mesechta Bava Batra 10a*). The Roman challenged the Jewish practice of giving charity to the needy by comparing the poor man to a slave whose human king became angry with him and ordered him imprisoned without food or drink. If a person defies this order and supplies the prisoner with food and drink, will not the king be upset with him for doing so?

Rabbi Akiva turned this simile around in order to refute the challenge: If a human king becomes angry with his son and orders him imprisoned without food and drink, will he not reward the one who supplies his beloved son with nourishment?

The Roman based his comparison on the Torah passage (*Vayikra 25:55*) in which Hashem states, “The children of Israel are my slaves,” while Rabbi Akiva referred to our opening passage in which Jews are called children. Turnusrufus did not back down, and suggested that only when Jews act in accordance with the will of Hashem are they called His children. The fact that they were under Roman rule following the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash* was evidence that they had not acted in this fashion and were therefore to be considered as slaves undeserving of the compassion expressed in charity. Rabbi Akiva’s position — even though he did not present it to the Roman challenger, but rather chose a response which would be more acceptable to him — was the one expressed in our *gemara* by his disciple Rabbi Meir, that even when we misbehave we are called Hashem’s children and deserving of the compassion of our brothers.

• *Kiddushin 36a*

DO IT YOURSELF

“A man makes *kiddushin* by himself or through an agent.” This opening line of the second *perek* of our *mesechta* is challenged by the *gemara* as

being redundant. If a man can effectively marry a woman through his agent’s giving her money or a document, isn’t it obvious that he can do so by himself?

Rabbi Yosef’s explanation is that the *Mishna* wishes to teach us that it is a greater mitzvah for a man to make *kiddushin* himself rather than to do it through an agent. As proof of this principle the *gemara* cites the examples of Rabbi Safra and the Sage Rava who personally helped prepare the food for Shabbat meals even though they could have delegated such work to their servants.

The examples cited find expression in the halacha (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 250:1*) which states that even if one has many servants to call upon, he should do something himself in preparation for Shabbat in order to honor it in the manner of the aforementioned sages.

A question is raised, however, by Mishna Berura (*ibid. Shaar Hatziun 9*) in regard to the behavior of those sages. The ruling of the *gemara* (*Mesechta Mo’ed Katan 9b*) is that one must interrupt his study of Torah in order to perform a mitzvah which cannot be done by another; but, if he is not indispensable for the fulfillment of the mitzvah, then he must continue his study. If these sages were able to have their servants make the Shabbat preparations for them, why did they see fit to interrupt their precious Torah study to do them?

One resolution of this problem is that the aforementioned rule of when one may or may not interrupt Torah study does not apply to *mitzvot* which are incumbent on the individual, only to acts of kindness which must be done for the sake of another Jew. Since that act can be performed by someone else not involved in Torah study there is no justification for interrupting Torah study. Honoring the Shabbat by preparing food for its meals, however, is a mitzvah which every Jew must do and it is therefore preferable to do it yourself than through an agent.

• *Kiddushin 41a*

I DIDN’T KNOW THAT!

Parshat Shelach has 119 verses, corresponding to the Hebrew word “*palat*” which means “He rescued.” This *Parsha* contains the sin of our rejecting the Land of Israel — a sin which caused G-d to decree that Israel be destroyed — yet, through Moshe’s prayers, G-d “rescued” us from this decree.

• *Rabbi Dovid Feinstein*

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why is the portion about the spies written immediately after the portion about Miriam's *tzara'at*?
2. To what was Moshe referring when he asked the spies "Are there trees in the land"?
3. Who built Hebron?
4. Which fruits did the *meraglim* bring back?
5. How many people carried the grape cluster?
6. Why did Hashem shorten the *meraglim*'s journey?
7. Why did the *meraglim* begin by saying the land is "flowing with milk and honey"?
8. Why did the *meraglim* list Amalek first among the hostile nations they encountered?
9. How did Calev quiet the people?
10. Why did the Land appear to "eat its inhabitants"?
11. Besides the incident of the *meraglim*, what other sin led to the decree of 40 years in the desert?
12. On what day did *Bnei Yisrael* cry due to the *meraglim*'s report? How did this affect future generations?
13. "Don't fear the people of the land...their defense is departed." (14:9) Who was their chief "defender"?
14. Calev and Yehoshua praised *Eretz Canaan* and tried to assure the people that they could be victorious. How did the people respond?
15. "How long shall I bear this evil congregation?" Hashem is referring to the 10 *meraglim* who slandered the Land. What halacha do we learn from this verse?
16. How is the *mitzvah* of *challah* different from other *mitzvot* associated with *Eretz Yisrael*?
17. What is the minimum amount of *challah* to be given to a *kohen* according to Torah Law? Rabbinic Law?
18. Verse 15:22 refers to what sin? How does the text indicate this?
19. Moshe's doubt regarding the punishment of the *mekoshesh etzim* (wood-gatherer) was different than his doubt regarding the punishment of the blasphemer. How did it differ?
20. How do the *tzitzit* remind us of the 613 commandments?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 13:2 - To show the evil of the *meraglim* (spies), that they saw Miriam punished for *lashon hara* (negative speech) yet failed to take a lesson from it.
2. 13:20 - Were there any righteous people in the land whose merit would "shade" the Canaanites from attack?
3. 13:22 - Cham.
4. 13:23 - A cluster of grapes, a pomegranate and a fig.
5. 13:23 - Eight.
6. 13:25 - Hashem knew the Jews would sin and be punished with a year's wandering for each day of the spies' mission. So He shortened the journey to soften the decree.
7. 13:27 - Any lie which doesn't start with an element of truth won't be believed; therefore, they began their false report with a true statement.
8. 13:29 - To frighten the Jews. The Jewish People were afraid of Amalek, because Amalek had once attacked them.
9. 13:30 - He fooled them by shouting, "Is this all that the son of Amram did to us?" The people quieted themselves to hear what disparaging thing Calev wished to say about the "son of Amram" (Moshe).
10. 13:32 - Hashem caused many deaths among the Canaanites so they would be preoccupied with burying their dead and not notice the *meraglim*.
11. 13:33 - The golden calf.
12. 14:1 - The 9th of Av (*Tisha B'av*). This date therefore became a day of crying for all future generations: Both Temples were destroyed on this date.
13. 14:9 - *lyov*.
14. 14:10 - They wanted to stone them.
15. 14:27 - That ten men are considered a congregation.
16. 15:18 - The obligation to observe other *mitzvot* associated with *Eretz Yisrael* began only after the possession and division of the Land. The *mitzvah* of *challah* was obligatory immediately upon entering the Land.
17. 15:20 - No fixed amount is stated by the Torah. Rabbinic Law requires a household to give 1/24 and a baker to give 1/48.
18. 15:22 - Idolatry. "All these commandments" means one transgression which is equal to transgressing all the commandments — i.e., idolatry.
19. 15:34 - Moshe knew that the *mekoshesh etzim* was liable for the death penalty, but not which specific means of death. Regarding the blasphemer, Moshe didn't know if he was liable for the death penalty.
20. 15:39 - The numerical value of the word *tzitzit* is 600. *Tzitzit* have eight threads and five knots. Add these numbers and you get 613.

FATHER'S AND MOTHER'S DAY

From: Stephanie Athea
<dingotte@hotmail.com>

Dear Rabbi,
Is there a Father's day and a Mother's day and in the Jewish religion?

Dear Stephanie Athea,
There sure is! It's called "Honor Thy Father and Mother" day. It starts on the 1st day of the year and continues on until the 365th. But don't worry, traditionally it does not last more than 120 years for any individual.

Sources:
• Exodus 20:12

IT'S ABOUT TIME

From: Jean M.
<seltek@flash.net>

Dear Rabbi,
How did people tell time in Biblical times since they didn't wear a wrist watch?

Dear Jean M.,
From ancient times until today people have told time by looking at the position of the sun, moon and stars. I once had a camp guide who could look at the sun and tell the time to within five minutes of our watches! He taught me how, and it really works! It works at night, too, using the moon or stars.

How? Look at the sun (not directly) with one eye closed and your right arm extended, thumb up and fingers pointing left. From this perspective, it takes the sun 15 minutes to travel the breadth of one finger. Put hand under hand until you reach the horizon. If you know sunrise or sunset you can then calculate the time. The same can be done at night

using the moon.

(This has come in especially handy on a Friday afternoon when I've forgotten my watch and needed to know how much time I had until Shabbat!)

The ancients had sundials. One such clock is mentioned in the Bible, regarding a miracle in which the Prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) "turned the shadow backward by ten degrees...on the sun-clock of Achaz." (Kings 20:11)

Sundials are still used today. From my window I can see the big, new, sundial on Jerusalem's modern "Road Number One" leading up to the Jaffa Gate.

Another ancient time device, at least 3500 years old, is the water clock. A water-filled vessel with inner markings measures passing time as water spills out of a little hole in the bottom.

LITTERING

From: Jeff in Miami

Dear Rabbi,
According to your recent Yiddle Riddle (Ohrnet Beha'alotcha), baby lambs grew up and gave birth within a year. Probably not without a miracle. I wasn't sure that sheep could breed that fast, so I searched and found the website:
http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/animal/4hyouth/sheep/sheepfacts.htm
It lists the minimum breeding age for ewes as 8 months and the minimum gestation period as 145 days. That adds up to quite a bit more than a year, doesn't it?

Dear Jeff,

You looked at the wrong website; you should have checked the Guinness Book of World Records! (Just kidding.)

But seriously, you may know that a Jewish year can have 13 months — what we call a leap year. So it comes out perfect! 145 days is 4.8 months (145/30 = 4.83). Add to that 8 months and you get 12.8 months, just enough time to have another litter before the end of the 13-month year!

KASHA! (KASHA MEANS "QUESTION")

Question: Efraim and Menashe were both sons of Yosef. So why in Parshat Shelach is only Menashe's tribe called "the sons of Yosef" and Efraim's tribe isn't? (13:8,11)

Answer: The scout from Menashe's tribe was one who spoke ill of the Land, hence, he is identified with his ancestor Yosef, who spoke ill of his brothers. Whereas the scout from Efraim's tribe, Yehoshua, did not speak ill of the Land; hence, he is not identified here as a "son of Yosef."

• Source: Musaf Rashi

Another answer:

Yaakov gave Yosef's sons Menashe and Efraim "tribe" status. Yaakov stipulated that Yosef's future sons would not have "tribe" status; rather, they would become part of either the tribe of Menashe or the tribe of Efraim, at Yosef's discretion. Yosef chose Menashe as the tribe to absorb these children. Hence, the tribe of Menashe includes not only Menashe's offspring, but the "sons of Yosef" as well.

• Source: Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky

Do you have a KASHA? Write to kasha@ohr.org.il with your questions on any Parsha!

Fine for Littering (Ohrnet Beha'alotcha):

I don't know what breed of sheep you were talking about, apparently you must be a city slicker, but for myself, having raised goats, cows, and sheep, as I own a farm, with only two teats, the ewe would die of dehydration, not being able to feed three of the lambs. Not to mention, the fact that the lambs would have to go into heat within seven months of being born. I usually enjoy and am intrigued by the Yiddle Riddle, but I'm sure some New Yorker, or other concrete cowboy, snickered with this one; please get real...

• Bob from Louisiana <bobsearle@yahoo.com>

Ohrnet (AKA "Concrete Cowboy") Responds:

Now wait one cotton-pickin' minute, Bob! I'm from Jerusalem, not New York. And you forgot that a Jewish leap year has 13 months (see above), so that the animals could conceive after eight months, not seven as you wrote. (I know, I know, some red-necked horse doctor probably told you to write that.)

Re: The Western Wall (Ohrnet Beha'alotcha):

You wrote the Kotel is the western wall of the ancient Temple. Correct me if I am wrong, but I always was given to believe that the Western Wall was built as a "retaining-

wall" by King Herod when he enlarged the Temple-Mount Area about 2000 years ago and is in no way connected with the actual western wall of our ancient Temple which was "totally" destroyed almost 2000 years ago. Respectfully,

• Rev. Helmut Loeffler, Manila, Philippines
<helmut@loeffler.com.ph>

Ohrnet Responds:

As for the Kotel being the western wall of the actual Temple Sanctuary, you are right that it is not. We chose to write as we did for simplicity's sake, as the Kotel is certainly associated with the Temple, but next time we will try to be more clear.

Ohr.Edu is...Not Enough!

I just discovered your site, Ohr.edu. I am delighted! What I am particularly enjoying is the audio portion. It will be a major connection to Torah and Jewish values for me. I will be suggesting this site to my family and friends as a source for Jewish thought and inspiration. How do I say this? It's not enough!! More please! Please don't misunderstand my enthusiasm as rudeness, but I have to get back to listening. Sincere thanks,

• Steve Brown <stevenbr@zahav.net.il>

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN

13:4	Order of the Meraglim
13:27,32 & 14:1,3	Tactics of the Meraglim
14:17	Moshe Rabbeinu's Prayer
15:2	Order of the Chapters

SEFER HACHINUCH

385	Challah
386	Tzitzit
387	Avoiding Intellectual and Physical Temptations

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