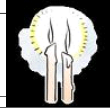


KUSHNER COMMENTS



Shabbat Candle Lighting: 8:06 PM
Havdalah: 9:06 PM

(Times are for Livingston, NJ)

Parsha Summary: *Parshat Shlach*

In *Parshat Shlach*, 12 tribal leaders are sent to *Eretz Yisrael* on a fact-finding mission. When they return, ten of them are shaken by what they are seen and they convince the nation that conquering the land would be impossible. Though two of the men, Yehoshua and Calev, plead with them to remember God's promise, *Bnei Yisrael* cannot be calmed. Hashem initially wants to exterminate the nation and assign Moshe a new nation to lead, but Moshe successfully argues on the nation's behalf. God then decrees that *Bnei Yisrael* will wander in the desert for forty years, allowing only the next generation to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. The nation realizes its mistake but it is too late. The *parsha* then ends with the assignment of *mitzvot*, some of which are tied to *Eretz Yisrael* specifically, thus showing *Bnei Yisrael* that they will ultimately reach the promised land.

Taking a Stand!

Rabbi Motti Miller

In this week's *parsha*, the Torah tells us that before Moshe sent out the 12 *meraglim* (spies) to investigate *Eretz Yisrael*, he changed one of their names: "Moshe called Hoshea bin Nun 'Yehoshua'" (13:16). *Rashi*, quoting a *midrash*, explains that the reason why the extra letter "yud" was added to Hoshea's name was to form the name of Hashem at the beginning of his name. ("Yud-hey") In doing this, Moshe prayed that Hashem would protect his faithful student from being involved in the evil conspiracy of the other spies. A second *midrash* teaches us that the extra "yud" was taken from the original name of our matriarch, Sarah. Hashem replaced the "yud" in the name "Sarai" with a "hey," so this "yud" had nowhere to go for a couple of hundred years until it was added to Yehoshua's name to protect him from the spies' scheme. But what is the meaning of all this letter changing and why did Moshe only pray for Yehoshua as apposed to all of the other spies?

Yehoshua was Moshe's faithful servant and he had always been involved in community service. His whole life was dedicated to the Jewish people as is emphasized by the *Gemara* that relates that Yehoshua would stay behind in the *Beit Midrash* at the end of the day to clean up and rearrange all the benches. Moshe was afraid that Yehoshua, who was always community-minded, would have a hard time breaking away and taking a stand when the evil plan of the spies would present itself. Since Yehoshua was always concerned with the needs of the larger community, Moshe feared that he would perhaps get caught up in their plan.

In contrast, Sarah had always lead a very private and quiet life until she and Avraham were charged with the mission to spread monotheism throughout the world. Hashem then changed her name to reflect her new responsibilities. There is great significance in a name. The name of a person represents the essence of the person, who he or she is and what his or her potential is. That is why the mystics write that when parents choose a Hebrew name for their child, in reality it is divinely inspired.

The letter "yud" is the smallest letter of the *Aleph Bet* and it is positioned on the uppermost part of where a

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פרשת שלח



In this week's Torah reading we read *parshat Shlach*. *Parshat Shlach* begins with Hashem telling Moshe that he may send men to spy on *Eretz K'na'an* if he chooses to do so. Hashem gives Moshe this option even though He already told Moshe that He has given the land to *Bnei Yisrael*. So why did Moshe still send men to spy the land? *Rashi* explains that He sent men to spy out the land because many people approached him, requesting to investigate the land. Moshe recognized the need to appease those individuals.

When the spies came back from their spy mission, they returned having the intention to speak negatively about *Eretz K'na'an*. In 13:33 it says, "There we saw *nephilim*, the sons of the giant from among the *nephilim*; we were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we were in their eyes." Adam Leibman of *Aish HaTorah* points out that according to this line, we see that the spies were not actually like grasshoppers but rather they considered themselves as grasshoppers, and they then believed others felt the same way. This message is relevant to everyone: However people see themselves is how they will assume others see them too. As a result, one way to change how others see you is to change how you see yourself. If you think of yourself as a "grasshopper," you will walk around thinking others view you the same way. If you think of yourself as being insecure, unattractive, un-ambitious, or any other negative trait, you will live with the reality that others view you in the exact same way. The way a person can change how he or she thinks others view him or her is to change how he or she views himself. The idea isn't to change their view of you but rather to change how you see yourself and then they will see you like that, too. A person's actions are a very important determinant in how one sees his or her self. If a person acts according to the way that he or she wants to be, then he or she will see his or her self more and more like that person. One will then notice that others see him or her like that, too.

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letter can reach, being the only letter that doesn't touch the bottom area that a letter may touch. The "*yud*" represents total spirituality; the letter's only focus is on the relationship with Hashem up above. The world we live in is represented by the letter "*hey*," which is combination of a "*yud*" that has been lowered and a "*daled*" that numerically is equal to four and thus represents the four corners of the earth. Our job in this world is to bring God down to the physical world and to create a manifestation of God throughout the four corners of the land.

Sarai had been building a relationship with Hashem in her personal life and then it became time for her to spread this knowledge and share it with the rest of the world. Hence, her name was changed from having a "*yud*" to having a "*hey*." Yehoshua was instead very much a community man initially, living a selfless life, putting aside his own feelings, and acting for the larger community. He needed to be able to focus solely on his relationship with God in order for him to get through the ordeal of the spies; therefore Moshe took Sarah's wandering "*yud*" and added it to Yehoshua's name in order to give him an extra dose of an individual connection with God.

We all live with the internal conflict of spiritual development on one hand, and family and community development on the other hand. Of course, ultimately the goal is to fuse these two into one, but there are times when this presents a challenge. Yehoshua took an unpopular stand against the rest of the *meraglim* and he stood up for what he believed in. There is always a delicate balance that we have to find in our lives to enable us to react properly to all the difficult situations that arise. May Hashem give us the strength to always make the right decisions and do the right thing!

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