



TORAH תורה
מציון MITZION
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BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AWAKENING AND STRENGTHENING BY RABBI EITAN MAAZARI (ROSH KOLLEL KTM MONTREAL)

In this week's parashah we read the story of the spies sent by Moses to the Land of Israel and when the spies return, they bring with them the fruits of the land including a large

bunch of grapes.

Today the cluster of grapes brought by the spies has become the official symbol of the Ministry of Tourism in Israel.

And so, Moses commands them:

וְהִתְחַנְּתֶם וְלִקְחֶתֶם מִפְּרֵי הָאָרֶץ וְהֵימָיִם יָמֵי בַפְּרִי עֲנָבִים

And take pains to bring back some of the fruit of the land.—Now it happened to be the season of the first ripe grapes.

The spies return and the Torah describes their return in a pastoral image:

וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-בְּנֵחֶל אֶשְׁכּוֹל וַיִּכְרְתוּ מִשָּׁם זְמוּרָה וְאֶשְׁכּוֹל עֲנָבִים אֶחָד וַיִּשְׂאֶהוּ בְּמוֹט בְּשָׁנָיִם וּמִן-הָרְמָנִים וּמִן-הַתְּאֵנִים

They reached the wadi Eshcol, and there they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes—it had to be borne on a carrying frame by two of them—and some pomegranates and figs.

Rashi wrote about this verse:

בְּשָׁנֵי מוֹטוֹת. הָאֵל כִּי־צִדָּ? שְׂמוּנָה נְטָלוּ אֶשְׁכּוֹל, אֶחָד נָטַל תְּאֵנָה וְאֶחָד רְמוֹן; יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָלֵב לֹא נְטָלוּ כְלוּם, לָפִי שֶׁכָּל עֲצָמָם לְהוֹצִיא דָבָר נִתְפַּנְּנוּ — כִּשְׁם שְׁפָרְיָהּ מְשֻׁנָּה כִּד עֲמָה מְשֻׁנָּה

“...upon two poles”. How was that done? Eight of the spies bore the cluster of grapes. Besides these, one spy took the fig and one the pomegranate, but Joshua and Caleb did not take anything (although all of them were bidden to do so; cf. v. 20), because the very essence of their (the other spies) intention was only to bring an evil report:

Why did the spies precisely bring these fruits and not other fruits that are in the Land of Israel? After all, there are other fruits that the country was praised for - dates and olives for example.

Another thing, why didn't Joshua and Caleb join in carrying the fruits, after all Moshe ordered all the spies to bring the fruits!

By the way, in the end the spies bring the fruits And only good things are said there:

בָּאוּנוּ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתָּנוּ וְהָאָרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וְדָבָשׁ הִיא וְזֶה-פְרִיָּהּ

“We came to the land you sent us to; it does indeed flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.”

The simple purpose of Moses commanding the spies to bring the fruits of the Land of Israel was clear - ‘When you bring the fruits, you will wake up the people both in the religious sense and in the physical sense - that they will wake up and they will say, ‘These are the fruits we are waiting for.’

This is the explanation that appears for the spies bringing grapes, Figs and pomegranates and not olives and dates. Everyone is familiar with wheat and barley since the time of Egypt, and it doesn't impress anyone. And the desert is also full of dates.

Olives? After all, they had olive oil in the tabernacle from which they lit the lamp of light. It's not exciting. What will they be excited about? Grapes, figs, and pomegranates from Israel!

Rabbi Mordechai Alon explained that there is another and deeper purpose when Moshe sent them to the land. He asked them for two things. As we mentioned, to awaken the people by bringing the fruits, but even before that he commanded - ‘and you shall be strengthened’. In Breslov Hasidic doctrine, there is a lot of talk

PARASHAT SHELACH
27 SIVAN
JUNE 16, 2023

CANDLES: 8:27 P.M.
HAVDALAH: 9:44 P.M.

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about the difference between ‘awakening’, and ‘strengthening’. These are two completely different concepts. A person can sometimes be in a great and huge awakening, in a very huge zeal - but the question is what will happen to him the next morning. Awakening is fine, but the big thing is how you maintain that awakening - and that’s a whole other thing. The maintenance of these strengths with devotion even when not everything is perfect, even when not everything goes easily, when not all life is figs and pomegranates and grapes, is the answer.

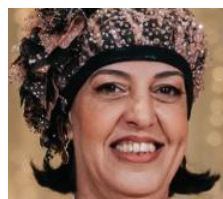
And how do we stay strengthened always? When we realize that God is always with us. And so are the words of Caleb and Joshua to the people:

אָתָּנוּ but ד' is with us



Joshua and Caleb say - ‘Moses our rabbi, did not send us to bring fruit to inspire the people only, but to inspire them on the condition that they are strong and strengthened and understand that not only when everything is good and beautiful but also when everything is desert and desolate - we are strengthened, and that’s the only way we go to the Land of Israel.

To be strong in faith, and to give this faith strength - we must use all the tools of the awakening and to bring forth the fruits of the Land of Israel. To feel the holiness of the land, to feel the connection and to understand that the connection to the land begins with the understanding that God is always with us.



MESSAGE FROM THE PARASHA BY SHIFRA MAAZARI

The spies frightening descriptions of the difficulties and troubles awaiting them in the Land of Israel included almost monstrous images of the local residents:

וְהָעַרְבִים בְּצִרּוֹת גְּדֹלַת מְאֹד, וְגַם-לְדֵי הָעֵנָק רְאִינוּ שָׁם... וְשָׁם רְאִינוּ, אֶת-הַנְּפִילִים בְּנֵי עֲנָק מִן-הַנְּפִלִים. וְנָהִי בְּעֵינֵינוּ כְּחִגְבִּים, וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם. - במדבר א, ד'

“...All the people that we saw in it were huge.... we were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we were in their eyes!” From their words a basic and very important rule in the relationship between people, nations and countries emerges and becomes clear - the environment sees and perceives us in the same way that we see and perceive ourselves. As soon as those spies saw themselves as weak and small as grasshoppers, then naturally and immediately they were also this way in the eyes of their enemies. Unlike the other spies, Yehoshua ben Nun, continues in the footsteps of Moses, and Caleb ben Yefuna, of whom the Torah testifies that there was “another spirit” with him, they

believe that:

עֲלֵה נַעֲלֵה וְיִרְשָׁנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ--כִּי-יָכוֹל נוֹכַח לָהּ - Let us go up at once and take possession of it, for certainly we are able” (Numbers 13:30). The two had the same basic eyes as the other spies, yet their perspective on the same reality was completely different and reflected high self-confidence. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov spoke a lot about the importance of seeing the good in us and focusing on it. Most of us, unfortunately, lack confidence in ourselves and we do not believe that we are good and deserve good. Naturally, we recognize in ourselves (and of course also in those around us) mainly the negative qualities and weak points. To see the bad is the easiest and the simplest, but the real challenge is, surprisingly, to find the good that exists in us and in the environment and focus on it. God forbid, it is not meant that we should not be aware of ourselves and our weaknesses that we strive to standardize, but instead the focus should be first and foremost, and for most of the time, on encouraging internal conversations and deluded thoughts about ourselves. There are enough people out there who will try to reduce us and fail us and unfortunately, there’s

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nothing we can do. If we do not build for ourselves self-love (again - not in the sense of ego and pride) then undoubtedly every small wave from the outside will bend and break us.



אין צדיק בארץ, אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא -קהלת

“There is no righteous man in the land, who does good and does

not sin” (Ecclesiastes). Everyone falls. The wisdom is to get up as quickly as possible and not to add self-hatred. Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin used to say that “the greatest sin of the evil inclination is not that it causes us to commit transgressions, but that it makes us forget that we are the sons of the king.” Nir Aviad, a life coach, says: The way to get to a state of mind where you feel appreciated and happy with who and what you are goes through remembering that there is not even one person among us who does not spend part of his time doing good and giving. For one, it could be volunteering in a charity organization or giving charity, and for the other it could be giving a smile to a person on the street or helping a parent or a child do something. Although we tend to focus on the bad in us and ignore the good deeds and qualities, in the eyes of God every positive action (even the smallest) is very precious in his eyes and he loves it very much. If God is satisfied with us, then who are we to constantly judge ourselves of our duty in life? No, we are not grasshoppers! We are sons of kings! Everyone has a priceless diamond that sparkles from within and just longs to be revealed. May we be blessed with the combination of working to correct bad habits, along with seeing the good. The greatest thing that exists is to discover the diamond within us and thanks to this help others discover the treasure within them.



A JOURNEY EXTENDED BY ZOHAR AVRAMOVIZ

וַיִּצְיֵאוּ דַבַּת הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תָּרוּ אֹתָהּ

They spread slander about the land that they had scouted...

In the last chapters we read about a number of sins that the Israelites committed during and after Mount Sinai. The sins begin with the sin of the golden calf and end with the sin of the spies. The sin of the spies and the sin of the golden calf are the two things that brought disaster upon the Israelites and to this day we pay for it. The question arises, why did the people of Israel continue their journey in the desert with the sin of the calf, while with the sin of the spies God waited for the entire desert generation to die? In addition, all the commentators have difficulty with the question, how can it be that the Israelites are sinning again? How can it be that immediately after Mount Sinai the people of Israel do not stop committing sins? Why did the spies speak badly about Israel? What was their fear of entering the Land of Israel?

Baal HaTanya (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi) explains that the leadership of today is the leadership of nature. Moses led the people of Israel with a special leadership, this leadership is called “miracle leadership”. People ‘experienced’ miracles every moment and holiness was an inseparable part of their daily lives. They saw the plagues of Egypt; felt the power of God in the parting of the Red Sea; walked in the desert without needing food and water; everything was under the leadership of Moses - “miraculous leadership”. From this situation, the people of Israel and the spies did not want to break away.

The sins of the Israelites do not come from a place of betrayal of God. They come from the fact that the people of Israel at Mount Sinai reached such a high spiritual level that, for them, they are unable to move to a situation where they are expected to separate the sacred from their everyday lives. The people expect holiness and spirituality to be an integral part of their lives. When Eldad and Medad prophesize in the camp, they do so with the belief that prophecy should not remain only within the confines of the Tabernacle. They want to integrate spirituality and holiness



everywhere and in every dimension of their lives. These sins end in our parasha with the sin of spies.

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