



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## News This Week

### Missing Seforim

A few Seforim seem to have gone missing from the Shul:

- פסחים חלק א' Artscroll Gemoro Hebrew Edition
- מועדים וזמנים (ר' משה שטרנבוך) חלק ב'
- לב אליהו חלק ב'

If you took any of them inadvertently please could you return them. Please note the Seforim are there for the benefit of everyone and only for use in Shul. Under no circumstances may Seforim be removed from the premises.

### Rejection or Rejected?

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Who doesn't know that Parashas Shlach Lecha is about how the Jewish people rejected Eretz Yisroel? Everyone knows about the 12 spies sent by Moshe Rabbeinu to check out the land in advance of the arrival of the rest of the nation, and how 10 of them came back with a negative report.

Even the Israeli Ministry of Tourism chose to use the two "good" spies as their logo. It's as if, one person joked, that they want to remind tourists not to bad-mouth Israel after their visit. "Remember what happened to the last group that spoke negatively after Israeli life!" they might be saying.

Interestingly enough is how no one ever seems to speak about how the Land rejected the Jewish people. Yes, it was the Spies who came back and delivered a scathing report, that dissuaded the rest of the nation from making aliyah. Perhaps though, it was what the Land WANTED them to do, so that they would NOT come into the Land.

We know that the Land does this from here:

You shall not defile yourselves by any of these things, for the nations, whom I am sending away from before you, have defiled themselves with all these things. The land became defiled, and I visited its sin upon it, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. (Vayikra 18:24-25)

"No, I CHOSE to leave," a person making "yeridah" from Eretz Yisroel once told me. "I could have stayed if I chose to."

"So, why didn't you?" I asked him.

"It wasn't working out for me there. I wasn't enjoying myself like I thought I would," he explained.

"Why not?" I asked.

"I'm just not used to a Middle-Eastern country. I thought I could adjust my way of thinking, but apparently I could not."

"But others have?" I pursued.

"I guess they could," he shrugged.

"I'm not sure," I said. "A lot of people said similar things but somehow they made it work and stayed. What do you think was the difference?"

He thought about it for a moment. I could see that he had never taken the discussion that far, and did not have an answer.

"I guess they're just luckier than I am," he finally said.

Aside from the fact that we do not believe in luck, his answer

overlooks one very important factor in life: Hashgochah Pratis— Divine Providence. A person can be "vomited" out by the Land, but it is Hashgochah Pratis that arranges it.

Sometimes in life G-d forcibly moves us around. Enemies can walk in and make us leave at gunpoint, G-d forbid. Other times, He arranges life in such a way that our own preferences and biases, in response to Divine Providence, make us go "up" or "down." We make the choice, but it is a choice that was set up by G-d Himself based upon a person's merit or demerit.

As Rashi points out in this week's parsha, 10 of the 12 spies came to Eretz Yisroel having already decided that they did not want to make aliyah. Even before they arrived at the border of the Land, they had already completed their mission as they saw it, not as they had been instructed by Moshe Rabbeinu. They arrived lacking sufficient merit to inherit the Land.

They probably thought when they saw what they did, that it was their lucky day. They had, or so they imagined, what they needed to validate their rejection of the Promised Land, and to convince the people to support their decision.

Clearly from the arrogance with which they returned, they had felt vindicated and justified.

It didn't occur to them that it was trap that they themselves had set. Their preconceived notions about aliyah and desire for materialistic comfort and political power jaded their vision. As G-d points out, the spies turned blessing into curse. The vision they saw was a product of their perceptions of reality, presented in such a way as to take advantage of them to their detriment. They tied the "noose" from which they eventually hung.

This is clear from their reaction to G-d's decision, to execute the perpetrators and to deny those who followed them, the opportunity to inherit the Land. They did a complete 180, as if waking up from a bad dream that just happened to be reality.

## The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת שלח	שבת מברכין תמוז
Mincha	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.55pm-8.00pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.54am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	9.54pm
Rov's Shiur	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	10.59pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.50pm

“It is what it is,” has become a very common expression these days. It says that reality is reality because it is reality, and we can’t change that. We have to accept it for what it is, and learn to work with it instead of fighting against it. This makes for a much smoother life, theoretically.

It is, however, only a half-truth. The other half says that it is what it is because of how we approach reality. G-d paves the road ahead of a person in the direction he chooses to go:

A man’s folly perverts his way, but his heart is angry with G-d. (Mishlei 19:3)

Harm comes upon him because of his sin, because his folly perverts his way and he commits sins for which he is punished. When the trouble occurs to him, his heart is angry with The Holy One, Blessed is He, and he questions the Divine standard of justice. (Rashi)

It’s a very important lesson about life in general, not just about aliyah. It tells a person how to analyze his decisions to make sure that he is not a victim of his own spiritual shortcomings. Getting what we want may be a short-lived celebration if it is a function of Divine Providence that, measure-for-measure, denies us the good we ourselves first incorrectly rejected.

Turn the situation around and doors to success may open that were never imagined. Teaching ourselves to like what we should results in Divine assistance to eventually love it, and to benefit from it. Dreams only come true when they are G-d’s as well.

## The Power of the Spoken Word

Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier (Torah.org)

### Timeline of the miraglim

The parsha of Shelach opens up with the story of the miraglim. Rashi notes that the previous parsha ended with the story of Miriam getting tzaras and being sent out of the camp because she spoke loшон harah about Moshe. Since this parsha begins with the miraglim, it implies that these two events are connected. But Rashi is bothered by the fact that they did not happen in chronological proximity. The events of the Korach rebellion were sandwiched in between.

Rashi explains that the Torah took these two events and juxtaposed them to teach us a lesson: Had the miraglim not been so wicked, they would have learned from what happened to Miriam, and that would have prevented them from saying their negative report about the land. However, says Rashi, “These wicked people saw what happened and didn’t learn from it.”

### The miraglim’s sin wasn’t loшон harah

The problem with this Rashi is that the miraglim’s sin had nothing to do with loшон harah; it emanated from a lack of trust in HASHEM. When they entered the land, they saw giants occupying fortified cities. They witnessed people dying left, right, and center. In their minds, if the Jewish nation attempted to conquer this land, they would be slaughtered wholesale – man, woman, and child.

Clearly, they were lacking in bitachon. Their faith in HASHEM was deficient. But they weren’t guilty of speaking loшон harah. First off, there is no prohibition against speaking loшон harah about land. Land is inanimate. We are forbidden from derogatory speech about people – not rocks.

Of even greater significance, once the miragalim made their mistake and concluded that HASHEM wasn’t powerful enough to bring us into the land, what they then spoke wasn’t loшон harah at all. In their calculation, they were saving the Jewish people from utter destruction, in which case it wasn’t forbidden speech; it was a mitzvah.

### Why does the Torah forbid loшон harah?

The answer to this question stems from understanding why the Torah forbids loшон harah. The Rambam defines loшон harah as words that hurt, words that damage. Whether they cause a person embarrassment, loss of income, or sully his reputation, the very definition of loшон harah is words that cause harm. That is the reason

the Torah forbids us to speak it – not because the Torah is so strict, but because words can have such a harmful effect.

To appreciate the damage that words can cause, imagine that I discover a cloak of invisibility. When I put this cape on, I can walk around freely without anyone seeing me. Imagine for a moment that after I find this cloak, I decide to have some fun. As I walk around the bais medrash, I take a sefer from one fellow and turn it upside down. Oh, his reaction when he sees it! Then I walk over to another fellow and close his Gemara. “Hey! What happened?” Next, I see a pair of charvusahs who are standing up for a moment. I walk over and put both of their Gemaras back on the shelf. “What-?”

I am having a jolly time!

After a while, I get a bit bolder. As someone is walking by, I leave my foot in the aisle. “Heyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy!” he yells as he falls to the floor with a crash.

“This is fun,” I think to myself. And now I really start to get into it.

As a fellow walks by, I give him a punch in the stomach, “Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh!” The next guy, I smash in the back, “Aggggggh!” And before you know it, guys are falling, getting smashed, and really getting hurt. The joke is no longer funny.

The Chofetz Chaim points out to us that the Torah reserves a curse for one who “hits his neighbor while hiding.” Chazal explain that this refers to someone who speaks loшон harah about his friend. Why am I so cavalier about what I say about him? Because he isn’t here. If he were standing right nearby, I would never say what I said. I say it only because he isn’t around. And in that sense, I am hitting him while hiding.

One of the reasons that we have difficulty controlling our speech is that we don’t see it as truly damaging. “What is the big deal if I tell an interesting story or two?” we say. While I would never dream of physically harming you, when it comes to ruining your reputation, damaging your business, or causing you harm in the way that people perceive you, then I am much less concerned. The Torah is teaching us that loшон harah is forbidden because of the power of the words and the damage they can cause. That is why they are forbidden.

### The power of speech

The answer to this question on the miraglim seems to be that they should have seen what happened to Miriam and learned one lesson from it – the power of speech. They should have thought to themselves, “If such a tzadekes said something only slightly questionable about her brother whom she loved and revered and had to be sent out of the encampment for seven days to suffer embarrassment and public humiliation, what does that tell us about the impact of her words? Why did HASHEM act so harshly with her? It must be that what she did was far more egregious than we realized. It must be that her words – while merely speech – are a powerful force.”

Had the miraglim learned this lesson, they would have been far more careful in their speech. They would have thought many times about the consequences of their words, and that would have made them stop and think to themselves, “Before we bring back this report, are we sure? Are we a hundred percent certain that the Jewish people will die trying to conquer this land? Didn’t HASHEM bring us out of Mitzrayim? Didn’t HASHEM split the sea for us?”

Understanding the power of speech would have caused them to think about the consequences, and the results might well have been very different.

This concept has great relevance in our lives. Most of the damage that we do through speech isn’t malicious or with bad intent. We speak without thinking about the consequences, without contemplating the results. The Torah is teaching us the power of those words and how careful we have to be with what we say, not because the Torah is machmir when it comes to sins of speech, but because of the effect that speech has to help or to harm – because of the power of the spoken word.