

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Shelach

26 Sivan, 5778 – June 9, 2018

Compiled from the works of
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson
The Lubavitcher Rebbe

by
Rabbi Shmuel Mendelsohn

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THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Shelach

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Rashi in His Own Words

במדבר י"ג, כ"ג: וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד נַחַל אֶשְׁכּוֹל וַיִּכְרְתוּ מִשָּׁם זְמוּרָה וְאַשְׁכּוֹל עֲנַבִּים אֶחָד וַיִּשְׂאֶהוּ בְּמוֹט בְּשָׁנִים וּמִן הָרְמָנִים וּמִן הַתְּאֵנִים:

רש"י ד"ה וישאֶהוּ בְּמוֹט בְּשָׁנִים: ... שמונה נטלו אשכול, אחד נטל תאנה ואחד רמון, יהושע וכלב לא נטלו כלום, לפי שכל עצמם להוציא דבה נתכוונו, כשם שפריה משונה כך עמה משונה ...

Bamidbar 13:23: They came to the Valley of Eshkol and they cut a branch with a cluster of grapes. They carried it on a pole between two (people) and (they also took) some pomegranates and figs.

Rashi Heading: They carried it on a pole between two (people): ... Eight of them took a cluster (of grapes), one took a fig and one took a pomegranate. Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not take anything, for the intention of the others was to present a slanderous report, (namely,) just as its fruit is extraordinary, so are its people extraordinary ...

Synopsis

This week's Torah portion, Shelach, tells us the famous story about the twelve spies who Moshe Rabbeinu sent from the wilderness to the land of Israel. We are told that they brought back the extraordinary, enormous fruit from the land to show the Jewish people. Rashi explains that Yehoshua and Kaleiv returned empty-handed. Rashi explains that this was because "the intention of the others (in bringing the fruit) was to present a slanderous report, (namely,) just as its fruit is extraordinary, so are its people extraordinary."

We need to understand how Yehoshua and Kaleiv could disobey Moshe! Moshe Rabbeinu told all twelve spies "You shall be courageous and take from the fruit of the land." It would seem that by returning without fruit, they were disregarding Moshe's words!

Rashi understands that the reasoning of Yehoshua and Kaleiv was based on a Talmudic discussion of this incident. The Talmud says¹ that "Eight spies carried the grape-cluster, one carried a pomegranate, and one carried a fig. Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not carry anything. The Gemorah gives two possible reasons that the two did not carry anything. One is because Yehoshua and Kaleiv were the most distinguished of the twelve spies. The second is because they did not wish to have a share in the plan of discouraging the other Jews from entering the land.

Rashi obviously agrees with the second explanation of the Talmud; they did not wish to be part of the plan to stop the Jews from entering Israel. However, there is a subtle difference between the way that Rashi and the Talmud phrase the same idea.

The Talmud says concisely that "they did not have a share in the plan." This implies, that they did not wish to do anything which could be interpreted that they agree with the other spies, despite the fact that there was nothing intrinsically wrong with carrying the fruit. However, Rashi's gives a more detailed, lengthy explanation. "Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not take anything, for the intention of the others was to present a slanderous report, (namely,) just as its fruit is extraordinary, so are its people extraordinary." The implication of this is that by carrying fruit they would actually be participating in the spy's plot. However, this

1. See Sotah 34, the end of Side a.

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did not exempt them from following Moshe's direct orders.

We also need to understand how Rashi derives that the act of bringing the fruit was in order to slander the land. They did not begin speaking badly about the land of Israel until after they showed the Jews the fruit. Rashi himself says that the reason they began their report by saying that² "We came to the land to which you sent us, and it is flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit," was because "Any lie in which a little truth is not stated in the beginning cannot be maintained in the end." In other words, the fruit was indeed of great quality. They used this kernel of truth in order to maintain the lie.

There are certain Mitzvos where the primary factor is the action, and others, where the primary factor is the result of the action. For example, regarding "Hand - Tefillin" the Torah commands us³ that "You shall tie them as a sign upon your hand." In other words, the Mitzvah is the act of binding the Tefillin. It then continues regarding "Head - Tefillin", "and they shall be as "Totafos"⁴ between your eyes." This indicates that the main factor is the fact that they are on ones head between his eyes.

The same may be true here. Perhaps Moshe was commanding them to show the fruit to the Jews. However, he may According to the Gemorah, what mattered was for the fruit to be there. It was irrelevant how it got there. It did not matter which, or how many of the spies brought the fruit.

However, Rashi's opinion, according to the simple meaning of the Torah is that it was a Mitzvah for each of the twelve individuals to bring fruit. Based on this, the only reason that could suffice for not following this instruction was "for the intention of the others was to present a slanderous report, (namely,) just as its fruit is extraordinary, so are its people extraordinary." No bad deed had been performed by the spies, but they had a hidden agenda. They wanted to appear as if they were righteous in order to persuade the Jews to rebel.

That is the reason that Yehoshua and Kaleiv could not participate. By participating they would have been corroborating with the other spies in a sin, namely their hidden motive. The prohibition against helping someone to sin outweighs the Mitzvah of listening to Moshe Rabbeinu. Or perhaps Moshe's original intention when he issued the command was not to bring fruit if it would aid in the performance of a sin.

Rashi's Explanation

This week's Torah portion, Shelach, tells us the famous story about the twelve men who Moshe Rabbeinu sent from the wilderness to spy out Eretz Yisroel. He sent one person from each tribe, and unfortunately all but two, Yehoshua Bin Nun and Kaleiv ben Yephuneh, returned with a negative report.

By way of introduction I would like to point out two things. Firstly, this mission was not commanded directly by Hashem. Rather, the Jewish people approached Moshe asking to send spies to scout out the land which they were about to enter. Moshe

2. Bamidbar 13:27.

3. Devorim 6:8.

4. The word "Totafos" which the Torah uses is not Hebrew. Rashi explains, citing the Talmud (Sanhedrin 4, b), that it means four (referring to the four compartments of the head Tefillin). He writes that "Tat" in Coptic means 'two,' and "Pat" in Afriki (Phrygian) also means "two."

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asked G-d, Who responded that He would leave it up to Moshe's discretion⁵. Secondly, at the time that these men were appointed to serve in this mission, they were righteous⁶. It was only afterwards that they rebelled against Hashem and Moshe and tried to dissuade the Jews from entering Israel.

In the verse which the Rebbe is explaining we are told that as part of their report they brought back the extraordinary, enormous fruit from the land in order to show it to the Jewish people. Rashi explains that ten of them returned carrying the fruit; in contrast to this Yehoshua and Kaleiv brought nothing. Rashi explains that the reason they did not carry fruit was because "the intention of the others (in bringing the fruit) was to present a slanderous report, (namely,) just as its fruit is extraordinary, so are its people extraordinary."

How does Rashi know that Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not return to the wilderness bearing fruit? It says so explicitly in the Talmud⁷. It says there that "Eight spies carried the grape-cluster, one carried a pomegranate, one carried a fig. Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not carry anything. The Gemorah gives two possible reasons for them not carrying anything. Either it was because Yehoshua and Kaleiv were the most distinguished of the spies⁸, or because they did not have a share in the plan⁹.

It would appear that the disagreement in the Talmud is based on whether even after the ten spies became wicked, Moshe's mission still remained in force. According to the Gemorah's first explanation, Moshe's mission was not nullified; however, Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not carry fruit because of a side reason. However, according to the second explanation, perhaps Moshe's mission was canceled because of the spy's change of heart¹⁰.

Based on this, we see that Rashi agrees with the second opinion in the Talmud¹¹, that "Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not take anything, for the intention of the others was to present a slanderous report." In other words, according to Rashi their mission was canceled, and was no longer in effect.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

Moshe clearly told the spies to return with fruit from the land¹². Despite whatever else was going on around them, they were obligated to follow Moshe and bring fruit. From their words and actions, it would be clear that their intention in bringing fruit would be in order to show how great the land was. We cannot explain that they were under no obligation to do so, because as stated above, the entire mission was not commanded by Hashem; rather it was of Moshe's own initiative. They were "emissaries -

5. See Rashi's second commentary to Bamidbar 13:2.

6. See Rashi's commentary to Bamidbar 13:3.

7. Sotah 34, the end of side a.

8. It would not suit people of their stature to carry a load.

9. Meaning the plan of the other ten spies to discourage the other Jews from entering Israel. The other Jews would judge from the size of the fruit what the size of the inhabitants of the land must be.

10. It may be possible to explain this disagreement Halachically as well. The difference is whether this mission was given to all twelve men individually, or whether the twelve men that Moshe sent were considered as one unit. If they were each commanded individually, anyone of them not fulfilling his mission would not affect the others. However, if they were one unit, his command to them was a general command to all twelve of them. This would be comparable to a commandment which is incumbent upon a community. If that was the case, canceling part of the mission would cancel the entire mission.

11. The reason that Rashi does not accept the Talmud's first explanation is obvious. According to Peshat, we cannot say that people such as Yehoshua and Kaleiv who were both so loyal to Moshe, would disobey his instructions because it did not suit their stature.

12. See Bamidbar 13:20.

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Shluchim" of Moshe. How could they disobey his explicit instructions?

It is totally incongruous with Peshat to say that Yehoshua and Kaleiv both thought that their mission was nullified, and therefore not binding because of the rebellion of the other spies. They returned together with the other spies, announced to all of the Jews that "the land is very, very good," and tried to persuade the nation not to follow the other spies. In other words, they took part in the mission, because it was still in full force.

The Explanation

We stated above that Rashi agrees with the second explanation of the Talmud; namely that they did not wish to be part of the plan to stop the Jews from entering Israel. However, there is a subtle difference between the way that Rashi and the Gemorah phrase the same idea.

The Talmud says concisely that "they did not have a share in the plan." This implies that they did not wish to do anything which could be interpreted that they agree with the other spies. This was true even if there was nothing wrong with carrying the fruit. However, Rashi, in his commentary to the Torah (Peshat), gives a more detailed, lengthy explanation. "Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not take anything, for the intention of the others was to present a slanderous report, (namely,) just as its fruit is extraordinary, so are its people extraordinary." The implication of this is that by carrying fruit they would actually be participating in the spy's plot; Rashi explains that the very act of bringing the fruit was a part of their plan.

From where does Rashi derive this? How does he know that the act of bringing the fruit was in order to slander the land? They did not begin speaking badly about the land of Israel until after they showed the Jews the fruit. Rashi himself says that the spies began their report saying that "We came to the land to which you sent us, and it is flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit," because "any lie in which a little truth is not stated in the beginning cannot be maintained in the end." In other words, the quality of the fruit was the truth which they used in order to maintain their lie.

We know that there are certain Mitzvos where the primary factor is the action, the performance of the Mitzvah. There are others, where the primary factor is the result of the action; i.e. the action must be performed. A good example is the Mitzvah of Tefillin, specifically "Hand Tefillin" and "Head Tefillin." The Torah commands us¹³ that "You shall tie them as a sign upon your hand," meaning the Mitzvah is the act of binding them. It then continues, "and they shall be as 'Totafos' between your eyes." There is no commandment to perform an action, rather they must be there. The main consideration is the result of the action, and not the action itself.

Similarly, we may consider this question regarding Moshe's instruction to bring the fruit. Perhaps Moshe was commanding them that the fruit be there upon their return. However, he may have actually been commanding them to bring fruit. This appears to be borne out by the fact that Moshe commanded them "You shall be courageous and take from the fruit of the land."

We can then explain that according to the Gemorah, what mattered was for the fruit to be there. Therefore, both of the Gemorah's answers are understandable. As long as the fruit got there, it did not matter whether or not Yehoshua and Kaleiv brought it. Therefore, either of the Gemorah's explanations suffice.

However, Rashi's opinion, in his commentary on the Torah, is that it was a Mitzvah for each of the twelve individuals to bring fruit. Therefore, Rashi cannot explain that they did not bring fruit because of their importance; that would certainly not be a

13. Devorim 6:8.

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reason to neglect the performance of a Mitzvah. The same applies to explaining that they did not bring fruit because it might be misinterpreted.

The only reason that could suffice for Rashi is that they did not bring fruit "for the intention of the others was to present a slanderous report, (namely,) just as its fruit is extraordinary, so are its people extraordinary." As we said before, at the time that they displayed the fruit they had not yet done anything which was not in keeping with their mission. To the contrary, they wanted to show the Jews that they had fulfilled their mission exactly as commanded by Moshe. No improper deed had been performed. It was their intentions that were bad. They had a hidden agenda in bringing the fruit. They wanted it to appear as if they were righteous in order to persuade the Jews to rebel.

That is the reason that Yehoshua and Kaleiv could not participate. If the other ten spies did not have any hidden motives, of course they would have been obligated to participate. However, by participating they would have helped the other spies in committing a sin, carrying out their hidden motives. The prohibition against helping someone to sin outweighs the Mitzvah of listening to Moshe Rabbeinu. Or perhaps Moshe's intention when he issued the command was not to bring fruit if it would aid in the performance of a sin.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

It is known that the mistake which the spies made, was in thinking that it was better to remain in the wilderness, performing Mitzvos with thought and speech, rather than entering Israel where they would be obligated to actually work with the physical world and perform physical Mitzvos. Our Sages teach us that action counts more than anything else. However, this can cause one to mistakenly believe that our thoughts and motives do not really matter all that much. Rashi is coming to explain to us the devastating results that can come from negative intentions and hidden motives. If this is the case with negative things, how much more so is it true about positive things. This is in keeping with the teaching that¹⁴ "a Mitzvah performed without thought is like a body without a soul." Just as a soul can transform a body from life to "the opposite of life," so too can the proper intentions bring life to a Mitzvah.

This can primarily be accomplished through the study of the deeper aspects of Torah, Chassidus, which is a sample of the deeper reasons of Mitzvos which will be revealed with the coming of Moshiach.

Similarly, the obligation to believe in Moshiach and await his coming must come from the depths of one's heart. This itself will hasten the true redemption and the fulfillment of the promise¹⁵, "I will remove the heart of stone from you, and will give you a heart of flesh," speedily in our days.

(Adapted from a talk given on Motzo' ai Shabbos Parshas Shelach 5738)

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14. See Tanya Chapter 38.

15. Yechezkel 36:26.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

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**IN HONOR OF
Chaim and Aiden Oded שיחיו Morris**

*

**DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS
Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיחיו Morris**

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Hatomim Avrohom Moshe ben Mina Esther שי' Gordon
For a complete and speedy recovery**

*

DEDICATED BY HIS CLASSMATES

in

YESHIVAH TORAH OHR שיחיו

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER
Mrs. Brocha bas Reb Tzvi Nechemiah Hacoheן ע"ה Cohen
Passed away on 8 Shevat, 5778
May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life**

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY

* * *

**IN HONOR OF
Mr. Sholom Moshe Hacoheן ben Tzivia שי' Cohen
For a complete and speedy recovery**

* * *

**DEDICATED BY
Hatomim Moshe Shlomoh Zohar שי' Mars**

*

May he merit to be a Chossid, a Yerei Shomayim and a Lamdon

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

* * *

לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

*

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

* * *

לזכות

הת' אברהם משה בן מרת מינה אסתר שי' גארדאן

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

*

נדפס ע"י חבריו התמימים

בישיבה תורה אור

* * *

לעילוי נשמת

מרת ברכה בת ר' צבי נחמי' הכהן ע"ה כהן

נפטרה ביום ח' שבט, ה'תשע"ח

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו

* * *

לזכות

ר' שלום משה הכהן בן צבי' שי' כהן

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

* * *

נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מארס

*

יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן