

SICHA POEM

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Shelach, Sicha 1

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What was the spiritual status of the Meraglim,
When they went on their mission?
Were they as righteous as could be,
Or from the beginning was there a reason for Moshe to worry?

When we look at Rashi's explanation,
We see a contradiction.
On the words "All of them were men of distinction," Rashi does say,
"At that hour they were righteous," in every way.

However on the words, "And Moshe called Hoshea the son of Nun, Yehoshua,"
Rashi says, that on Yehoshua's behalf, Moshe said a Tefillah.
"May Hashem save you from the counsel of the spies." so that you shouldn't stray,
This implies that Moshe sensed the wickedness of the spies right away.

This is stated clearly,
In Rashi's later commentary,
On the words "They went and they came,"
With evil intentions, their going and coming was the same.

To resolve the contradiction,
The commentaries give an explanation.
At the hour that they were chosen they were as righteous as could be,
But they became wicked as soon as they set out on their journey.

But this doesn't resolve Rashi's statement,
That Moshe davened for his student,
Because the prayer took place during the hour that they were chosen,
Before the journey did begin.

Some commentaries suggest that they were righteous initially,
But the evil inclination sparked within them immediately.
Whether the land is good or bad from Moshe signs they did seek,
To know which cities are fortified and if the people are strong or weak.

Moshe sensed that the evil inclination was near,
Because why would they care,
To investigate more than their share,
Therefore Moshe prayed for his student so dear.

This explanation is nice,
But for three reasons it doesn't suffice.

1. It is hard to say that "at that hour" should be taken literally,
That they were righteous for a brief period of time only.
2. If so, Rashi should have narrowed down the time frame to the very first moment,
By writing, "They were righteous at the time of their appointment.
3. If Moshe sensed that their intent was evil,
Why didn't Moshe replace these spies with other people?

Commentaries explain that Moshe didn't stop Yehoshua from going along,
Rather he prayed that he would be saved and be strong,
So that perhaps Yehoshua and Kalev would be successful,
In returning the spies from their thoughts so evil.

But this still doesn't answer the question,
How could Moshe risk the downfall of the Jewish nation?
If he had a doubt that the spies would sin,
Why didn't he immediately cancel the mission?

Moshe knew from the beginning,
That for Hashem, the idea of sending spies was disappointing.
Rashi says "Send for yourself - according to your own understanding,
If you wish, send, I am not commanding.

For the Jewish people came and said, 'Let us send men ahead of us,'
Hashem said 'I told them that the land is good... (don't make a fuss),
By their lives,
I will give them room to err through the words of the spies...'"

Although from Hashem, Moshe heard directly,
That to send spies wasn't necessary,
According to Moshe's understanding he did agree,
He thought it would work to use reverse psychology.

If he wouldn't hold them back the Yidden would see,
That Moshe is as confident as can be,
That Eretz Yisrael is truly a land filled with milk and honey,
This would make them retract their request and realize that to doubt Hashem is silly.

Even after the Yidden didn't back down,
Moshe couldn't show a frown.
He selected the finest men to bring back the fruit of the land with confidence,
To prove the goodness of the land with tangible evidence.

However this doesn't explain why Moshe didn't object,
When he sensed that the very men that he did select,
Had intentions that were not okay,
He should have stopped them right away.

Therefore we are forced to say,
That the two statements don't contradict one another in any way.
At that hour the men were righteous it is true,
And the prayer to save Yehoshua from the counsel of the spies had great value.

The precise wording of Rashi gives us a clue,
"From the counsel of the spies may Hashem save you!"
Why wasn't the prayer, May Hashem save you from the sin of the spies?
Why use the word counsel which means to plot and strategize?

Also with regards to Kalev, Rashi does say,
At the graves of the Avos, Kalev did pray,
That he would not feel a pull,
To join his colleagues' counsel.

Rashi specifically uses the word counsel to emphasize,
That he doesn't mean that Hashem should save Yehoshua from the sin of the spies,
Because at that hour they were still righteous and not associated with slander,
But in this case even good counsel was risky and led to error.

The problem with counsel is that it wasn't what Moshe asked them to do,
Like a tourist the land they were just meant to view,
They were asked to bring fruit too,
To prove that the land was great for every Jew.

When describing the mission the term spying we don't see,
The term touring is written only.
The best way to conquer the land they weren't asked to find,
By spying and devising a plan with their mind.

Now Moshe and Kalev's prayers we understand,
The point was to be saved from the counsel of the spies regarding the land.
At first the counsel was good so there was no reason to stop the mission,
Although the spies took upon themselves more responsibility than they were given.

Counsel requires caution,
Because it's all about craftiness and deception.
The truth must be hidden,
It was the root of the spies' sin and rebellion.

Sometimes sending spies is an absolute necessity,
Because otherwise it is impossible by natural means to defeat the enemy.
And Moshe did end up sending spies eventually,
But this wasn't the task currently.

In this case Moshe wanted that the mission,
Should be strictly limited to physical action.
To counsel Moshe didn't want Yehoshua to have any connection,
Because from the attribute of truth it distances the person.

On a deeper level, truth is Moshe's defining attribute we see,
So in order to be Moshe's emissary, truth is absolutely necessary,
Because a person's emissary is considered to be,
An extension of himself, literally.

Entering the land was such a fundamental matter,
Therefore the power of the sender,
Had to be manifest in a revealed manner,
Through emissaries that had the attribute of truth at every hour!

When the spies deviated from their mission,
They lost Moshe's protection,
Only Yehoshua and Kaleb remained Moshe's emissaries who did declare,
“The land is exceedingly good, the people of the land, do not fear!”
