



# Kinder Torah<sup>®</sup>



For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table

Parshas Shelach

Dedicated in Loving Memory of R' Gershon Ben R' Eliyahu Zalman Goodman z"l

## The Reward is Great

"Go see the land (of Israel). What is it like?" (Bamidbar 13:18). Thus began the mission of the *meraglim* (spies). They were sent to spy out the land of Israel; specifically to answer these questions: "Are the inhabitants of the land strong or weak, many or few? Is the land good or bad, fertile or lean, wooded or barren? Are the cities open or fortified?" They returned from their forty day mission with a report of a rich land flowing with milk and honey, with powerful inhabitants who lived in fortified cities. The Ramban comments that they answered all of the questions correctly. Yet the Torah reports that they committed a disastrous sin, the effects of which we still suffer to this day. What did they do wrong? They used a little word which means nothing, yet it changed the meaning of everything. "*Efes*" is translated as "nothing". The land, although it is wonderful, is worth nothing to us because we cannot conquer it. The inhabitants are too powerful. Although Hashem had promised the Jewish people that they would inherit the land, the *meraglim* questioned Hashem's credibility. This was their sin. Calev and Yehoshua tried to salvage the situation by assuring the Jewish people that the inhabitants were easily defeated. "They are our bread" (Bamidbar 14:9). The Chofetz Chaim zt"l comments that no one is afraid of a big loaf of bread. On the contrary, everyone knows that he will get a bigger piece.

**Kinderlach . . .**  
*Big challenges mean big rewards. "I have so much to review for the test and so little time. I have to make shalom with him? But we've been fighting for so long. I have to come to school on time every day? I have to watch my speech all of the time?" These are big challenges for us, kinderlach. But we know the reward is great. As Rebbe Tarfon writes in Pirkei Avos (2:20), "The day is short; the job is big . . . the reward is great."*

## Our Holy Land

The *meraglim* were punished for speaking badly about Hashem and the Land of Israel. There are so many wonderful things to say about our land. The gemora writes in Kiddushin 49b, "Ten portions of wisdom came down to the world. Nine of them

went to the Land of Israel. Ten portions of beauty came down to the world. Nine of them went to Jerusalem." The Maharal explains that wisdom of the Land of Israel is a special wisdom given to the land because of its holiness. Similarly, the beauty of Jerusalem is a spiritual beauty, flowing from holiness. The gemora in Bava Basra (158b) write that Rebbe Zeira came to the land of Israel to learn the truth because "the air of the Land of Israel makes a person wise."

**Kinderlach . . .**  
*The Land of Israel is one of Hashem's most precious gifts to the Jewish people. How fortunate are those who are able to live in this land. For two thousand years we did not have such an opportunity. There are so many ways to appreciate our land and its beauty. Let us go around the Shabbos table and have each person express his own praise of Land of Israel.*

## I Came Here to Work

"Make *tzitzis* (fringes) on the corners of your garments" (Bamidbar 15:38). The Medrash relates that Hashem gave us many, many mitzvos to give us an opportunity to earn great rewards in the World to Come. Everything that He created in this world contains within it a mitzvah. When we plow, we cannot use an ox and a donkey together. When we plant, we cannot mix seeds. When we harvest, we must give to the poor. When we knead, we must take *challah*. When we eat meat, we must give the Kohain his portion. When we come to a bird's nest, we must send away the mother. When we slaughter an animal, we must cover the blood. When we plant, we cannot eat the fruits of the first three years. When we cut our hair, we must leave the corners. When we build a house, we must put a guardrail on the roof and *mezuzah* on the door. When we cover ourselves with a four-cornered garment, we must put *tzitzis* on it.

Rav Amnon Yitzchak, Shlita relates a parable about a man who landed a job polishing gems. He was to be paid for each stone that he polished. The first day of work, he received five stones to polish. He happily completed his work and received his salary for the day. He did notice, however, that the worker next to

him received twenty stones that day. The next day he reported for work and again received five stones to polish. He completed the job quickly and watched his neighbor working hard polishing twenty stones. He was somewhat upset but reasoned that since he was new at the job, he did not yet receive a full workload. However, the situation did not change. Every day he received five stones, while his neighbor received twenty. One day, he could no longer contain himself. He went to the boss complaining, "What are you doing? Why aren't you giving me more work? I came here to work and make money! Give me work so that I can make money!"

The Mishna in Makkos (3:16) writes: Rebbe Chanania Ben Akashia taught, "Hashem wanted to reward the Jewish people. That is why He gave them such a large Torah and so many mitzvos. As the Navi (Yishayahu 42:21) says, 'Hashem wants the Jews to be *tzaddikim*, therefore he enlarged and strengthened the Torah.'"

**Kinderlach . . .**  
*We said before, "The day is short; the job is big . . . the reward is great." Now we begin to see just how big the job is. We can do a mitzvah practically every minute of every day! Isn't that great? After all, we came here to work, didn't we? So let's all work hard, just like the gem polisher. He only got five gems a day to polish. But we have 613 gems to work with. Each mitzvah is a real gem. Keep working and polishing them. The reward is greater than you can imagine.*

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