

RABBI AHARON ZIEGLER - PARASHAT SHE'LACH - 2019

“HOW A THREE LETTER WORD, LIKE “BUT” CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING”

In this parasha- Yehoshua and Kalev said it all, **TOVAH HA'ARETZ ME'OD, ME'OD** (14:7). No one could express it any better- “The Land that we passed through is **VERY VERY GOOD**. Not only is it good, and not only very good, but very,very good. That one word, that extra “very” conveys a powerful message. That second “very” is saying that the land is very good and No Buts..., no Ifs no However and no exceptions..., can be added.

The Chofetz Chaim teaches us in his Sefer on Lashon HaRa, not to talk about people at all. Even saying something good or positive about the person can lead to Lashon Hara. Saying that he is a good person, a kind person and a wonderful person, and then adding, “but he sometimes”.... That “but” can sometimes ruin a persons’ reputation, his livelihood –and even his life. Our Parasha testifies to the truth of that matter.

The other ten spies also admitted that the Land was good, however, they then qualified their praise with a “But”, saying, “But the people that live there are very strong and their cities are fortified” (13:28). In other words, the Land is good- but, there are problems.

When we speak about Eretz Yisrael it must be all positive. Saying things are good, and then adding a “BUT”..that is bordering on Lashon HaRa. We can criticize the people, their mannerism, or we can find fault with the government, we can complain about beauracracy, but we cannot say anything negative about the Land that Gd has chosen.

The Navi Ye'ches'keil [Ezekiel] was given a prophesy to expressed some very harsh words about the Land and the people of Israel. HaShem tells him to rebuke the people by saying:”HATISHPOT HATISHPOT ET IR HA'DAMIM” “Now you Ben Adam, will you rebuke the **city of bloodshed and let her know all of her abominations?**” (22:2) This chapter was originally selected to be the Haftarah for Parashat Kedoshim. The directions found in Chumashim state that according to Sephardic custom this Haftarah is read for Parashat Acharei-Mot, while according to Ashkenazic custom it is read for Parashat Kedoshim. Each custom tried to defer it to another week and delay its reading. However, it has become a universally accepted minhag, that we never read this perek of Ye'ches'keil as our Haftarah, for it speaks very harshly against the Land of Israel. Rav Soloveitchik commented, the Navi had no choice, for he was commanded to convey this prophesy, *however, we are not obligated to listen to it, so we just don't read it aloud to the congregation.*

Therefore, the lesson for us today, whether we live in Aretz or in Chutz LaAretz, the Land is Tovah Me'od Me'od!! We are not allowed to express anything negative about it or **even listen to anything negative that is expressed by others**. For me personally this is very easy to observe because I truly believe it to be true. It bothers me terribly to hear people, who do love the land, yet telling others, “its wonderful here, but bitterly cold in

the winter, or extremely hot in the summer,” or, some American food items are just not available here. That too is a form of Lashon HaRa.!

Interesting, throughout history our ancestors sinned. There was the Golden Calf, the Korach rebellion, their complaints about lacking water, the food menu—and every time they were forgiven. Even for the Eigel HaZahav- and nothing could be worse than that – yet Moshe pleaded “Vesalachta La’avoneinu U’Lechatoteinu (Shemot 34:9) and Gd said, - I will forgive them as you (Moshe) requested. For everything there is Teshuva, except for the sin of speaking negatively about Eretz Yisrael. For this we had to suffer a delay of 40 years before entering Eretz Yisrael.

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT “SHELACH”

- 1-At the end of the parasha (15:32) a man was found to be “gathering wood on Shabbat”. The Torah does not identify who this man was, but R’ Akiva does reveal his name . Who is this man and how did R’ Akiva come to this realization? (see gemara Shabbat 96a)?
 - 2- Why did R’ Yehuda ben B’teira criticize R’ Akiva?
 - 3-Who said, the Land is VERY ,VERY good?
 - 4-Who were the Ma’apilim?
 - 5- In 14:1- it is written, “The people wept THAT night”. What night is the Torah referring to?
 - 6- What do YOU think is the probable connection between the beginning of our parashat and end of last weeks parasha? Any logical answer accepted.-
 - 7--Who became the wife of Yehoshua? (the answer relates to he Haftara)
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KOL HAKAVOD TO THOSE WHO ANSWERED LAST WEEK:#1*Mordechai Ziegler-Elazar,Israel//Rabbi Levi VanLeeuwen-Elazar//*Pechman Family-J’lem// *Rabbi Jay Karzen-Arnona,Israel//Esther Chaitovsky-Teaneck,NJ//*Rabbi Steven Mauner-Kollel Agudath Achim-Beit HaKerem//Libby Ziegler-Yerushalayim//*Dr. Joseph Taitelbaum-Staten IslandNY//Yaakov Schwartz-Lakewood,NJ//*Dr.Michael Rose-Kollel AA-Katamon,Israel//Shea Schwartz-Willowbrook NY//*Rabbi Charles Meisels-Far Rockaway,NY//

