

Parshas Shelach

This week's parsha is Shelach, where we are described the incident of the Jews sending spies into Israel- who reported negatively about the land, such that the punishment was the Jews time was extended in the desert.

The Haftora from Yehoshua 2:1-24 describes the "spies" Yehoshua sent to Yericho- just before the Jews were going to enter the land. The parallel to our parsha is obvious- but the difference is beautifully described the the Rebbe in a Mamer- Shelach Lecha, where he describes according to Chassidus, the difference between the spies that Moshe sent and the spies that Yehoshua sent. There are distinct qualitative and quantitative differences between the two events of the spies- which also relate to the soul's journey on Earth, in its effort to be affected by its surroundings or protected in service to Hashem.

According to Medrish Rabba, Yehoshua got the "yud" in his name from Sarah (whose name was changed in Bereishis from Saray to Sarah). The Yud represents the 10 characteristics that are imbued in a person to have the strength to succeed, as Moshe indicated by changing Hoshea's name to Yehoshua. Sarah our foremother was the person who knew about the continuity of the Jewish people through Yitzchak and was the figurehead who had ultimate Mesiras Nefesh for Hashem. This strength was saved for Yehoshua, so that when he travelled with the spies he was protected. Why Yehoshua got the name and not Kalev ben Yefuneh is likely a reflection of his position as the next leader of the Jews following Moshe.

Additionally, in last week's Haftora – from Zecharia - the Yehoshua referenced was the first Kohen Gadol of the second Beis Hamikdash. Satan tried to petition against his service by incriminating him for some iniquities that were ultimately forgiven and explained by Zecharia as a parable for how we will be forgiven and Mashiach will come.

I don't think the reference of hope as seen last week, and the strength we see from our Yehoshua this week, are unrelated. In fact, is it the fact that the person has strength to persevere and be forgiven for their naturally being imperfect. Something Sarah our foremother knew about her future generations, and Yehoshua the next leader of the Jews had, and ultimately, that strength is imbued in us, so that all these years later, we remain strong, steadfast, ready, and waiting for the ultimate revelation, where we will be led as a strong nation with Mashiach.

In our parsha as well we learn about the mitzva of Tzitzis, the garment we use to shroud ourselves to remind us to stay on the steady path of Hashem (in the event we don't have a "yud" in our name). That is we take something wear it, in order to make sure that we stay true to the path of Torah and Mitzvos

Good Shabbos