



## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Our *Sedra* this week, *Parshat Shelach*, recalls the challenging episode of the *Meraglim*, whom *Moshe Rabbeinu* sent forth to scout out the Land of Israel.

In his instructions to the *Meraglim*, *Moshe Rabbeinu* spells out the details he is seeking from the *Meraglim* in their assessment of *Eretz Yisrael*.

*"Uma HaAretz HaShmeina hi im Raza, hayeish ba Eitz im ayin, vehitchazaktem ulekachtem mipri haaretz..."*

*And what of the Land- is it fertile or is it lean, are there trees there or not, you shall strengthen yourselves and take from the fruit of the Land...*

**Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Horowitz, the Patiker Rav zt'l, in Sefer Beit Aharon** points out that at first glance it seems that *Moshe Rabbeinu* is suggesting to the *Meraglim* that he is seeking a report on the physical situation in the Land, and seemingly their report accurately addresses that assignment.

However, in his advice to eat of the fruits of the Land so that "you may be strengthened", *Moshe* is actually communicating that by imbibing the fruits which grew in the sacred soil of *Eretz Yisrael*, the *Meraglim* would be strengthened spiritually, and be able to see beyond the physical challenges and see the amazing potential and beauty inherent in the Land of Israel.

The *Chidushei HaRim*, the first *Gerrer*

*Rebbe zy'a* actually points to the phrase *HaYeish bo Eitz im Ayin*- usually translated to mean are there trees, forests there or not, as holding the clue to *Moshe's* actual instruction to the *Meraglim*.

Said the *Chidushei HaRim-HaYeish bo Eitz*- Do you perceive the *Eitz HaChaim*- do you feel the *Torah's* wisdom pulsating through the very environment of *Eretz Yisrael*?

**Rabbi Gedalya Schorr zt'l** in his masterpiece *Ohr Gedalyahu* explains that since the *Meraglim* misunderstood *Moshe's* goal in sending them to scout out the Land, and thus the *Meraglim* were solely focused on the physical reality on the ground, they misunderstood that the *Eitz - Moshe* was referring to was actually the *Eitz HaChaim* that is the *Torah HaKedosa*.

*Chazal* in the *Gemara* in *Bava Batra* teach:

*Avira D'Eretz Yisrael Machkim- the very atmosphere of the Land of Israel breeds wisdom and clarity.* So too, explained the *Chidushei HaRim*, *Moshe* hoped to convey to the *Meraglim* that in addition to what they might find as the situation on the ground, when one comes to *Eretz Yisrael*, we have the potential to perceive a much greater reality than that which we simply see before us.

May each of us merit to indeed feel that clarity, and experience the spiritual wisdom and palpable heightened awareness that is inherent in the very atmosphere of our sacred Land.... ■