



**ALEPH  
INSTITUTE**

No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

# TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

3 - 9 June, 2018  
20 - 26 Sivan, 5778

**Torah :**  
Numbers 13:1 - 15:41

**Haftorah:**  
Joshua 2:1-24

## ■ CALENDARS

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

## ■ FAMILY PROGRAMS

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

## ■ GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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## DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSION?

Some conclusions are more obvious than others. Sometimes the most obvious conclusion isn't necessarily correct. Drawing our own conclusions can often be a risky business.

Take the case in this week's Parshah. The spies sent by Moses return from their reconnaissance mission of the Promised Land with a frightening report about the fierce warrior nations of Canaan. The Jewish people are dejected and frightened, and even weep at the thought of their impending invasion, convinced it can only be a suicidal mission impossible. The Almighty is angered, the people are punished for their lack of faith in His promise, and the spies go down in history as the villains in the story.

But why? What, in fact, was their sin? Moses asked for a report of the land. They came back and reported exactly what they had seen. They told no lies. The land was formidable. The inhabitants were huge and powerful. The fruits were extraordinarily large. They even brought back samples to prove it. So, if it was all true, why were they punished?

The answer lies not in the report, but in their conclusion. The facts as the spies presented them were entirely accurate. The sin was

their conclusion, "We will not be able to go up to that people, for it is too strong for us." Moses had sent them on a fact-finding mission. Their job was to bring back information. Nobody asked them for their personal opinions. The whole point of their mission was to gather the data necessary for the Israelites to find the best way of conquering the land. That they would do so was a given. G-d had promised them the land, told them of its natural beauty and assured them of success.

The same G-d who just miraculously delivered you from Egypt, the mightiest superpower on earth; split the sea for you; and revealed Himself in all His glory to you at Sinai—has now said that the Promised Land is there waiting for you. And, after all He has done for you, you turn around and publicly doubt His power to help you succeed? This is not only a mistake in judgment. This is shameful, sinful and faithless. The spies' report was correct, but their conclusion was disastrous.

A high-school teacher decided to demonstrate to his class the dangers of alcohol abuse. So he conducted an experiment. He took one glass of water and one glass of whiskey. He then took a little worm and dropped it into the glass of water. The worm had a nice swim, and then the teacher removed the worm unharmed. He then dropped the worm into the glass of whiskey. In no time at all,

## Parshat Shlach

the worm was dead. He then turned to the class and asked them what the experiment proved. Whereupon one wise guy at the back piped up and said, "Sir, it proves conclusively that if you drink enough whiskey, you will never suffer from worms!"

The facts are there for all of us to see. The question is how to interpret them. If we have a preconceived position and then manipulate the data to draw conclusions that suit us, we may come off clever at first, but in the end we may well go the way of the spies. Without faith, even the most accurate information can lead to the wrong conclusion.

*By Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

## A LEADER'S FAITH

His daughter asks him if she should try out for the sports team. He thinks she is not up to it. He wants to protect her from failure. So he tells her not to try. He tells her that it will be too difficult. He tells her that the sport is not that much fun anyway. He tells her that she will be much happier if she would just do something else.

His employee approaches him with a brilliant new idea. He loves the idea, but he does not believe his team can pull it off successfully. He tells them it's too risky, too much work, and ultimately it is not a good idea.

He is acting like the biblical spies.

The children of Isra-

el's journey through the desert took a disastrous turn when they asked Moses to dispatch spies to the land of Canaan to scout out the land and its inhabitants. Moses handpicked 12 leaders, one per tribe, and sent them off. They returned to Moses and the people, and reported that despite G-d's assurances, conquering the land was impossible:

We came to the land to which you sent us, and it is flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. However, the people who inhabit the land are mighty, and the cities are extremely huge and fortified, and there we saw even the offspring of the giant. . . . We are unable to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.

They spread an [evil] report about the land which they had scouted, telling the children of Israel, "The land we passed through to explore is a land that consumes its inhabitants." *Numbers 13:27-28, 32.*

Virtually all the commentators ask the same question: How is it possible that the spies had a complete loss of faith after experiencing all the miracles of the Exodus firsthand? How is it possible that great men, handpicked by Moses, failed to maintain their trust in G-d?

Perhaps we can suggest that the spies never lost faith in G-d or in His ability to perform miracles. They trusted G-d, but they did not trust the people.

Sure, they thought, G-d is perfectly capable of performing miracles if He wishes to do so. The problem, the spies thought, was that there was no chance the people would remain loyal to G-d and deserving of His protection. They therefore concluded that conquering Canaan was impossible, because the people were not up to the task.

Seeking to protect their beloved people from failure, the spies reacted like the father trying to discourage his daughter in order to protect her from failure. They said that the task was too difficult: "We are unable to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." They told the people that the land is not desirable in the first place: "The land we passed through to explore is a land that consumes its inhabitants."

The spies may have acted out of love, but they failed both the mission and the people they were meant to serve. In moments of challenge, a leader must lift up, inspire, teach, encourage and show others how to discover the reservoirs of faith, courage and strength hidden within the soul.

We are all leaders in our circle of influence. Our family and friends look to us for guidance. We must remember never to underestimate and discourage as the spies did, for we must always be like Moses, Joshua and Caleb, who believed in the people and sought to discover within them the treasures that lay hidden deep within their souls.

*By Rabbi Menachem Feldman*

## *In Jewish History*

***Wednesday, 23 Sivan, 5778 - June 6, 2018***

***Jeroboam Barricades Jerusalem (797 BCE)***

After King Solomon's passing in 797 BCE, ten of the twelve tribes of Israel, led by Jeroboam ben Nebat of the tribe of Ephraim, rebelled against Solomon's son and heir, Rehoboam. The Holy Land split into two kingdoms: the "Kingdom of Israel" in the north, with Jeroboam as its king and the city of Samaria as its capital; and the southern "Kingdom of Judah" with its capital Jerusalem, where Rehoboam ruled over the two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) that remained loyal to the royal house of David. The spiritual center of the land, however, remained Jerusalem, where the Holy Temple built by Solomon stood, and where every Jew was obligated to make a thrice-yearly pilgrimage for the festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. Seeing this as a threat to his sovereignty, Jeroboam set up, on Sivan 23 of that year, roadblocks to prevent the people's pilgrimage to Jerusalem, introducing instead the worship of two idols, in the form of gold calves, which he enshrined on the northern and southern boundaries of his realm.

The barricades remained in place for 223 years, until Hoshea ben Elah, the last king of the Northern Kingdom, had them removed on the 15th of Av of 574 BCE. By then, the ten tribes residing there were already being expelled from the land in a series of invasions by various Assyrian and Babylonian kings. The last of these occurred in 556 BCE, when Shalmaneser of Assyria completely conquered the Kingdom of Israel, destroyed its capital, exiled the last of the Israelites residing there, and resettled the land with foreign peoples from Kutha and Babylon. These peoples -- later known as the "Samaritans" -- assumed a form of Judaism as their religion, but were never accepted as such by the Jewish people; they subsequently built their own temple on Mount Gerizim and became bitter enemies of the Jews. The "Ten Lost Tribes of Israel" were never heard from again, and await the coming of the Moshiach to be reunited with the Jewish people.

***Haman's Decree Counteracted (357 BCE)***

Even after Haman was hanged on the 17th of Nisan of 357 BCE, his evil decree "to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, from young to old, infants and women, in one day, the 13th day of the 12th month (Adar)" remained in force. Queen Esther pleaded with King Achashverosh to annul the decree, but Achashverosh insisted that "a writ that has been written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's seal, cannot be returned." Instead, he suggested to Esther and Mordechai to "inscribe, regarding the Jews, as you please, and seal it with the king's seal." On the 23rd of Sivan, Mordechai drafted a royal decree giving the Jews the license to defend themselves and kill all who rise up against them to kill them, and dispatched it to all 127 provinces of Achashverosh's empire. (Book of Esther, chapter 8)