

Torah Weekly

ת"ב

June 11-17, 2023
Sivan 22-28, 5783

Torah Reading: Shelach
Numbers 13:1 - 15:41
Haftarah: Joshua 2:1-24
Parshat Shelach

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 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

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

A Leaders 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 Israel'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."

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

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, 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

Sunday, June 11, 2023 --- 22 Sivan, 5783

Miriam Quarantined (1312 BCE)

Miriam, the elder sister of Moses and Aaron, was afflicted with tzaraat (leprosy) after speaking negatively of Moses, and was quarantined outside of the camp for seven days--as related in Numbers 12

Monday, June 12, 2023 --- 23 Sivan, 5783

Haman's Decree Counteracted (357 BCE)

Even after Haman was hanged on the 17th of Nissan 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)

Passing of R. Yaakov Pollack (1525)

R. Yaakov Pollack served as rabbi first in Prague and then in Cracow. In Cracow he established a large yeshiva that attracted thousands of students. R. Yaakov devised a new method of Talmudic study known as *pilpul*, with the goal of stimulating the intellectual abilities of his students. Although many scholars of subsequent generations opposed this method, R. Yaakov succeeded in bringing about a renewal of Talmudic study in Poland, which became a major Torah center for the next four centuries.

Wednesday, June 14, 2023 --- 25 Sivan, 5783

Three of the "Ten Martyrs" Killed (2nd century CE)

Among the millions of Jews cruelly killed by the Romans were the "Ten Martyrs"--all great sages and leaders of Israel--memorialized in a special prayer recited on Yom Kippur. Three of them--Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha and Rabbi Chanina S'gan Hakohanim--were killed on Sivan 25.

Egyptians Sue Jews (4th Century BCE)

Egyptian representatives appeared in the court of Alexander the Great, demanding that the Jews pay restitution for all the Egyptian gold and silver they took along with them during the Exodus. Geviha the son of Pesisa, a simple but wise Jew, requested the sages' permission to present a defense on behalf of the Jews.

Geviha asked the Egyptians for evidence that the Jews absconded with their wealth. "The crime is clearly recorded in your Torah," the Egyptians gleefully responded.

"In that case," Geviha said, "the Torah also says that 600,000 Jews were unjustly enslaved by the Egyptians for many, many years. So first let us calculate how much you owe us..."

The court granted the Egyptians three days in which to prepare a response. When they were unable to do so they fled on the following day and never returned.

In Talmudic times, the day when the Egyptian delegation fled was celebrated as a mini-holiday.

(According to some traditions, this event took place on Nissan 24.)

Shabbat, June 17, 2023, 2023 --- 28 Sivan, 5783

Rebbe Arrives in US (1941)

After escaping Nazi-occupied Paris, and many perilous months in Vichy France, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), and his wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka (1901-1988), boarded the *SS Serpa Pinto* in Lisbon, Portugal. On Monday, June 23--Sivan 28 on the Jewish calendar--at 10:30 A.M., they arrived in New York.

Shortly after his arrival, the Rebbe's father-in-law, the then Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (who had been rescued from Nazi-occupied Warsaw in 1940), appointed him to head the social and educational outreach programs of Chabad-Lubavitch. Thus the Rebbe began his decades-long revolutionary work to revitalize Jewish life in the Western Hemisphere, which spread, by means of the emissaries ("shluchim") he dispatched from his New York headquarters, to every part of the world.