

Torah Weekly

Meraglim, Mossad, and Military Might

PARSHAT SHLACH

7-13 June
22-28 Sivan

Shlach: Numbers 13:1 - 15:41
Joshua 2:1-24

The world looked on in awe as Israel began its miraculous campaign against the Iranian threat. Within hours, Iran's military leadership and nuclear scientists were eliminated, and many of its missiles and launchers decimated.

The Mossad spied for years. IDF and IAF trained for months. The advance preparation is unimaginable.

And so is the alternative.

Where would we be if this operation hadn't taken place? If Iran was still marching full speed ahead toward nuclear weaponry? If they were smashing out ballistic missiles by the thousand? As harsh as the situation is now—and thank the Almighty for His constant miracles—without this operation, we would be in deep, deep trouble.

I can't help drawing a parallel to another operation, one we read about in this week's Torah portion: Spies, victory, conquest.

Who: the 12 Spies Moses sent. Their task: Scout out the Holy Land. Assess the weaknesses of the Canaanites and determine the best way to victory.

Only in that operation, the result wasn't as dazzling. The spies came back with negative reports: "We can't do it. Mission impossible."

The consequences? A tragedy. Forty years in the desert. The passing of an entire generation.

If not for this blunder, we're told, the Jewish people would have marched into the Land of Israel with the Final Redemption. Thousands of years of darkness, exile, trials and tribulations throughout our history would have never come to pass.

But the Spies made a fatal error. In their mission to scout out the land, they were tasked with a basic question: How? How should we conquer? What is the best way?

But instead, they asked if. Is it possible? Can we really succeed? And that was their failure.

But the story of the Spies is more than just history. The Torah tells us the story to teach each of us a lesson that remains applicable today in 2025.

Every person is given a mission, assigned by the One Above. How do we figure out our mission? We look for clues in our background and history, our talents and interests, and—of course—the needs we discover in the world.

It is up to us to work out the how, never the if.

G-d Almighty doesn't expect without providing the tools we need to succeed.

The mission is timely and critical. The world relies on you to complete your part: We're marching toward the Final Redemption, a time when peace will finally reign, and you're at the front

By Elchonon Morozov

Shelach in a Nutshell

Numbers 13:1-15:41

The name of the Parshah, "Shelach," means "Send" and it is found in Numbers 13:2.

Moses sends twelve spies to the land of Canaan. Forty days later they return, carrying a huge cluster of grapes, a pomegranate and a fig, to report on a lush and bountiful land. But ten of the spies warn that the inhabitants of the land are giants and warriors "more powerful than we"; only Caleb and Joshua insist that the land can be conquered, as G-d has commanded.

The people weep that they'd rather return to Egypt. G-d decrees that Israel's entry into the land shall be delayed forty years, during which time that entire generation will die out in the desert. A group of remorseful Jews storm the mountain on the border of the land, and are routed by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

The laws of the nesachim (meal, wine and oil offerings) are given, as well as the mitzvah to consecrate a portion of the dough (challah) to G-d when making bread. A man violates the Shabbat by gathering sticks, and is put to death. G-d instructs to place fringes (tzitzit) on the four corners of our garments, so that we should remember to fulfill the mitzvot (divine commandments).

Shelach Roundup

Moses sends twelve spies (one from each tribe) to the Land of Canaan (the former name of the Land of Israel) to see what the land and its people are like. The spies tour the whole land and when they come back after forty days they tell the people that it is indeed a land "flowing with milk and honey." But, they add, the people in it are very strong and the cities have huge walls like fortresses, and "we even saw giants." And they tell the Jews that the land would be much too difficult to conquer. Even though two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, disagree with the rest, saying that the land is very good and they can surely conquer it, the Jews believe those with the bad report, and they cry out to Moses that they don't want to go.

G-d is furiously angry and wants to kill all the Jews, but Moses begs him not to, reminding Him that He is a G-d of mercy. So G-d agrees to spare the Jews but says that, because they complained, except for Joshua and

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).

Sacred material – do not desecrate

Aleph Institute

Hyman & Martha Rogal Center
5804 Beacon Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-421-0111
Fax: 412-521-5948
www.alephne.org
info@alephne.org



ALEPH INSTITUTE
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

Caleb, none of these people will go into the land; they will all die in the desert. Then he tells Moses to turn around from the direction they were going, and head towards the desert.

When Moses tells the people that they would have to stay in the desert for forty years instead of going into the Land of Israel, they realize what a horrible mistake they had made and are very sad. Some of the people say, "Okay, we realize that we sinned, and we are ready to go into the land!" and they go up the mountain, getting ready to enter the land. But Moses tells them that it is too late and that they should not go, because G-d is not with them and they will not succeed. They go anyway, and suffer a terrible defeat by the Canaanites and the Amalekites.

We learn about the mitzvah of Challah—when we bake bread, a portion of it must go to G-d. Today, when we don't have a Sanctuary, we make sure to burn a piece of the dough before baking the bread.

A man gathers wood on the Sabbath, desecrating it, and he is put to death.

We learn about the mitzvah of tiztzit, fringes worn on the corners of a four-cornered garment. When we see the fringes, we remember who we are and the mitzvot that G-d has commanded us.

Shelach Haftorah in a Nutshell

Joshua 2:1-24.

This week's haftorah tells the story of the spies that Joshua sent to scout the city of Jericho, prior to the Israelites' invasion of the Holy Land, a point in common with this week's Torah reading, which discusses the twelve spies that were sent by Moses years earlier to explore the Holy Land.

Joshua sent two spies to Jericho, where they lodged at an inn located in the city's walls, operated by a woman named Rahab. Their presence was quickly discovered by the king who sent for Rahab and asked her to turn in her guests. Rahab responded that her guests had already left the city—when actually she had hidden them on her rooftop.

"And she said to the men, I know that G-d has given you the land, and that your terror has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away because of you. For we have heard how G-d dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt; and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you completely destroyed."

At Rahab's request, the two spies assured her that she and her family would not be harmed during the conquer of Jericho—provided that she would tie a scarlet thread and hang it from her window. This would be a symbol that this home is a safe haven. Rahab helped the men escape via a rope she lowered from her window and told them how to hide from possible pursuers. The spies escaped safely and returned to report to Joshua.

IN JEWISH HISTORY

Miriam Quarantined (1312 BCE) 22 Sivan

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

Jeroboam Barricades Jerusalem (797 BCE) 23 Sivan

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) 23 Sivan

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)

Rebbe Arrives in US (1941) 28 Sivan

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.