

Parshah Shelach
in a Nutshell
(Numbers 13:1–15:41)

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 menachot (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). ❖



The three loves — love of G-d, love of Torah and love of one's fellow — are one.
-- The Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the grace of Hashem, following all CDC Guidelines, our Shul is now able to offer Minyanim at this time. See new schedule to the left, or contact one of the rabbis for details.

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – June 19 / Sivan 27

Candle Lighting 8:14 pm

Mincha 7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – June 20 / Sivan 28

Tehillim Reading 8:30 am

Shacharis..... 10:00 am*

Torah Reading..... 10:55 am

Rabbi Neubort's Drasha..... 11:30 am

Kiddush Postponed

Mincha 8:15 pm

Rabbi's Drasha 8:40 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 9:23 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:09 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha / Maariv 8:15 pm

Classes

Chassidus, Mon-Fri 5:50 am

Halachah, Mon-Fri Postponed

Monday Torah Studies.... Online only

Tuesday Talmud..... Online only

Wednesday Mishna Online only

Thursday B'lyun 9:30-10:00 pm

תהלים

Tehillim - Psalms

**Join us this Shabbos morning
June 20 at 8:30 am for
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.**

**This week's Tehillim reading is
dedicated to
a refuah sh'laima
for
Avraham Yankel ben Fayge.**

The Talmud teaches that the best vaccine against all illness is a healthy confidence in the Director of the Universe.

Eruv website:

www.fairlawneruv.com

Eruv Hotline: 201-254-9190.

Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, June 20

Eastern Daylight Time

Earliest Tallis 4:12 AM

Latest Morning Shema 9:09 AM

Earliest Mincha (Gedola).. 1:37 PM

Plag Hamincha 7:02 PM

Earliest Evening Shema 9:06 PM

Chassidic Masters

The Generation Gap

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

In the history of a people, as in that of an individual life, things don't always go as planned.

The original plan was to go like this: On the 15th of Nissan in the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), the people of Israel are taken out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. After seven weeks of preparation and self-refinement, they receive the Torah, their mandate from G-d as His "nation of priests and holy people," at Mount Sinai. From Sinai it's an eleven-day journey to the land of Canaan—the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as Israel's eternal homeland. There Moses builds the Holy Temple to serve as the seat of the divine presence in the physical world, and the people of Israel implement the blueprint for life contained in the Torah, establishing the model society which serves as the keystone of a harmonious world-community embodying the goodness and perfection of their Creator.

That, however, is not what came to pass. Instead, the journey from Sinai to the Holy Land took not eleven days but forty years. The generation of the Exodus became "the generation of the desert"—only two of the 600,000 adult males who left Egypt lived to enter the Land of Canaan. The grand plan

over which Moses was to preside was delayed, and still awaits completion. Moses' disciple, Joshua, began the conquest of the Holy Land, but the task was completed only five centuries later by King David. David's son, Solomon, built the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, but this was not the eternal edifice which Moses would have constructed; it was destroyed by the Babylonians in 3338 (423 BCE), rebuilt by Ezra in 3408 (353 BCE), and destroyed once more, by the Romans, in 3829 (69 CE). The people of Israel failed to fully live up to their role as a "light unto the nations," and were exiled from their land. The perfect and harmonious world which we were to have achieved by entering the Land of Canaan under Moses' leadership still awaits attainment by Moshiach.

What went wrong? The story is told in our Parshah, and is repeated (with the addition of a few important details) in Moses' account in the first chapter of Deuteronomy.

The children of Israel were encamped at Kadesh, on the border of Canaan, in preparation to enter the land, when they approached Moses with a request:

"Let us send men before us, so that they shall search out the land for us and bring us back word as to which road we should take and into which cities we shall come"
(Deuteronomy 1:22).

Moses conveyed the people's request to G-d, and G-d replied:

"Act according to your own understanding" (Numbers 13:2, as per Rashi on this verse). Moses sent twelve spies — one representative from each of the twelve tribes of Israel—to scout the land and report on its terrain and its inhabitants. Forty days later, on the eighth day of Av of the year 2449, the spies returned, bearing samples of the land's huge and luscious fruit, along with the following assessment:

"We came to the land that you have sent us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey; this is its fruit."

"However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very great; we also saw giants there. The Amalekites dwell in the Negev; the Hittites, the Jebusites and the Emorites in the hills; and the Canaanites at the sea and on the banks of the Jordan."

"We cannot go up against these people, for they are mightier than we." (Numbers 13:27–31)

Their report caused the nation to lose faith in their ability to conquer the Holy Land, despite G-d's promises. Indeed, the Sages note that the Hebrew word *mimenu*, "than we," also translates as "than he": the spies were, in effect, saying that "they are mightier than He"—that the conquest of the Holy Land is beyond the capacity of the Almighty Himself!

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All night the nation wept and bemoaned their fate, crying to Moses: “Why is G-d bringing us to this land to fall by the sword, and for our wives and children to fall into captivity?”

Thus it came to pass that on the Ninth of Av—a day which was to bode many tragedies for the people of Israel—G-d informed Moses that the generation that received the Torah at Sinai was not fit to enter the land of Canaan. He decreed that they would live out their lives as wanderers in the desert, until a new generation could take up the challenge of conquering the land of Canaan and developing it as a “Holy Land”—as the focus of G-d’s presence in the material world.

What Happened?

Virtually all the commentaries pose the question: What happened? Where did they go wrong?

The spies dispatched by Moses were no ordinary individuals: “They were all men of distinction, leaders of the children of Israel” (Numbers 13:3). Furthermore, in all of history, it would be difficult to find a generation whose lives were more saturated with miracles than theirs. Egypt, the most powerful nation on earth at the time, was forced to free them from slavery when “the mighty hand” of G-d inflicted ten supernatural plagues. When Pharaoh’s armies pursued them, the sea split to let them pass, and then drowned their pursuers. In the desert, miracles were the stuff of their daily lives: manna from heaven was their daily bread, “Miriam’s well” (a miraculous stone which traveled along with the Israelite camp) provided them with water, and “clouds of glory” sheltered them from the desert heat and cold, kept them clothed and shod, destroyed the snakes and scorpions in their path, and flattened the terrain before them to ease their way.

For these people to doubt G-d’s ability to conquer the “mighty inhabitants” of Canaan seems nothing less than ludicrous. Yet these were the people whose leaders said, “We cannot go up against these people, for they are mightier than we” — and even “than He”!

Where did they go wrong?

Desert Idyll

Chassidic master Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi explains that the problem was one of excess spirituality.

The daily miracles experienced by the generation of the Exodus did more than provide them with sustenance and protection; they shielded them from any and all involvement with the material world. For the first generation of our existence as a people, we lived a wholly spiritual life, free of all material concerns; the very food which nourished us was “bread from heaven.”

Indeed, it could not have been any other way. Our sages have said that “the Torah could have been given only to the eaters of the manna.” To properly receive and assimilate the divine wisdom, one must be utterly free of the responsibilities and frustrations of physical life—something that is possible only in the kind of environment which our ancestors enjoyed during their sojourn in the Sinai Desert.

This is why, says Rabbi Schneur Zalman, the spies and their generation were loath to enter the land. Becoming a people with a land would entail plowing, sowing and harvesting; it would mean engaging in commerce and levying taxes; it would require a bureaucracy to run the land, and an army to defend it. Their underlying problem with the land was, as the spies expressed it, that “it is a land that consumes its inhabitants”—it consumes one’s time and energy with its corporeal demands, and infringes on one’s capacity to study the divine wisdom of Torah and meditate upon its truths. They were unwilling to relinquish their spiritual utopia for the entanglements of an earthbound life.

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Based on this, the Lubavitcher Rebbe explains the spies' argument, "We cannot go up against these people, for they are mightier than we," notwithstanding the tremendous miracles which G-d had performed and was performing for them. We cannot have it both ways, argued the spies. Either we are to be a spiritual people engaged exclusively in spiritual pursuits and sustained by supernatural means, or else we are to enter the natural world of the farmer, merchant and soldier, and become subject to its laws. And under these laws—which decree that the numerous, mighty and well-fortified will defeat the few and the weak — there is no way we can defeat the inhabitants of Canaan.

They even went so far as to extend this line of reasoning to the Almighty Himself. If G-d wishes for us to live a spiritual life, then certainly He can sustain us with miracles. But if His desire is that we abandon our supra-natural existence to enter the land and assume a natural life, then He Himself has decreed that natural law will govern our fate. In that case, He cannot empower us to miraculously conquer the land, since were He to do so, this would defeat the entire purpose of entering the "land." So, "they are mightier than He" — even G-d cannot help us, if He Himself has chosen to transform us into a material people!

Fallen Angels

This also explains the spies' mysterious allusion to "the nefillim, the descendants of the giants, the fallen ones" whom they encountered in the Holy Land.

Who were the nefillim? The Midrash relates that in the years before the Flood, when violence and promiscuity pervaded the earth, two angels, Shamchazai and Azael, pleaded before the Almighty: "Allow us to dwell among the humans, and we shall sanctify Your name!" But no sooner had the two heavenly beings come in contact with the material world than they too were corrupted, and played a major role in the disintegration and destruction of their adopted society.

We saw them there, said the returning spies to the people, the fallen angels who survived the Flood but did not survive the land.

If these heavenly beings could not survive the plunge to mundanity, what could be expected of us, mortal and fragile men?

Having It Both Ways

What the spies and their generation failed to understand is that, indeed, men are not angels. Wholly spirit, the angel dissolves on contact with earth. But the human being, hewn of spirit and matter, is a synthesis of the celestial and the animal. Man is empowered to make heaven on earth, to make "holy" an adjective of "land."

This is the essence of the divine objective of creation and the mission entrusted to us at Sinai: to build "a dwelling for G-d in the lowly realms." To imbue our plowing, sowing and commerce with a holy and G-dly purpose.

In charging us with this mission, the Creator empowered us to indeed "have it both ways": to create a land that is holy, a nature that is miraculous, a reality that is not bound by its own defining parameters, for it serves a purpose greater than itself.

Achieving this aim required a two-phased program: an initial state of unmitigated holiness and spirituality, followed by "entrance into the land" and assumption of its material labors. Because in order to sanctify the land, one requires a vision of the divine truth of truths — which can be attained only by a nation of "manna eaters." So, first there had to be that period of utter isolation from the material world. However, this phase of our national existence was not an end in itself, but the way in which to acquire the tools and resources to miraculize the natural and elevate the everyday.

If the "generation of the desert" would themselves have been capable of making the transition into a people of the land, the transformation of the material world into a home

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for G-d would have been fully and perfectly achieved in that very generation. If they would have believed in their divinely granted capacity to “have it both ways,” their sanctification of the land would have combined their ultimate apprehension of the divine truth with a full involvement with the natural reality.

The generation of the desert failed to actualize the unique opportunity which presented itself at that particular juncture of our history: for there to be a single generation which straddled both worlds, a single generation which first inhabited a world of utter spirituality and then proceeded to apply it to a life on the land. Instead, they fell prey to the tendency of man to “compartmentalize” his life, to label his experiences and attainments as “material,” “spiritual,” “sacred,” “mundane,” “natural” and “supernatural,” thereby delegating and confining them to their respective domains.

So it was left to their children to embark on the longer, more difficult journey, a journey only now reaching its culmination: to bridge the formidable “generation gap” which separates us from our manna-eating ancestors, and apply the pristine truth they received in the desert to our own earthbound lives.

On a Personal Note

In addition to the cosmic-historical saga, the very same process and challenge exist, in a miniature scale, in every individual life. In our own lives, we each have a “generation of the desert” and a “generation which enters the land.”

Our childhood and youth are a spiritual and miraculous time: our needs are provided to us “from above” without effort or worry on our part; the business of running the world is blessedly none of our concern. Such a hermitic existence, while contrary to the ultimate purpose of our lives, is the optimal environment for the acquisition of the beliefs, values and knowledge which will guide and inspire our development of the world when we subsequently “enter the land” in our adult years.

The same is true of each particular day of life: we begin our day with a sacrosanct hour of prayer and Torah study, before crossing over into the workday and embarking on the development and sanctification of the material world.

Here, too, exists the danger of succumbing to a “generation gap” between one’s “Sinai Desert” and “Land of Israel,” of adopting the “either/or” mentality of the spies. Therein lies the eternal lesson of the Torah’s account of the incident of the spies: do not allow the wisdom, sensitivity and inspiration of your youth to remain an isolated period in your life. Do not allow your moments of attachment to G-d each morning to remain a “miracle” with no bearing on the natural course of your day. Cross into the land, but do not leave your spiritual “childhood” behind. Remember that the purpose of it all is to make your life and world a “holy land.” ❖

From Our Sages

It shall be to you as fringes; and you shall see it (Numbers 15:39)

Said Rabbi Meir: it does not say “and you shall see them,” but “and you shall see Him” (the Hebrew oto also translates as “him”). This teaches that everyone who fulfills the mitzvah of tzitzit, it is as if he has greeted the face of the Divine Presence. For the blue thread resembles the sea, the sea resembles grasses, grasses resemble the sky, and the sky resembles the divine throne.

-- (Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot 1:2)

You shall see . . . and you shall remember . . . and you shall do (Numbers 15:39)

Sight brings on memory, and memory brings deed.

-- (Talmud, Menachot 43b)

Haftarah for Shelach in a Nutshell

Joshua 2:1-24

This week's haftarah 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. ❖

From all of us at Anshei-Lubavitch, we hope and pray for the safety and health of you and your loved ones. May the Almighty protect us all and send complete healing to those who need healing. And may our world very soon find the ultimate cure to all diseases with the coming of Moshiach, sooner than we can imagine.

"It would be desirable that you establish the custom of reciting Tehillim — at least a few kapitlach — in shul during the weekdays as well. Convey to the congregants the words that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, related: that reciting Tehillim protects [a person] from many undesirable matters and draws down abundant good for the needs of every single individual."

-- Lubavitcher Rebbe 16 Iyar, 5711

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

