

**Parshas 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 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.

*(continued next column)*



The spies returned and spread panic among the Jewish people, making them afraid to enter Eretz Yisrael.

As the narrative indicates, however, this error can be corrected through teshuvah, a sincere return to G-d. Indeed, through teshuvah, a person can surpass his previous level of Divine service.

– The Rebbe

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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). ❖

**תהילים**  
*Tehillim - Psalms*  
Join us this Shabbos morning  
June 5 at 8:30 AM for  
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.  
This week's Tehillim reading is  
dedicated to  
a refuah sh'laima  
for  
Elimelech ben Leah.

Join us each weekday  
morning Mon-Fri as we  
delve into the mysteries of  
Chassidic concepts.  
5:55 am followed  
immediately by Shacharis.

*Thank You to:  
The Baal Korei,  
and the  
Security Volunteers*

**Halachic Zmanim**  
Shabbos, June 5, 2021  
Daylight Savings Time  
Earliest Tallis ..... 4:14 AM  
Latest Morning Shema .... 9:07 AM  
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) ..1:34 PM  
Plag Hamincha .....6:56 PM  
Earliest Evening Shema ....8:59 PM

**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 4 / Sivan 24**

Candle Lighting .....8:07 pm  
Mincha .....7:30 pm

**Shabbos Day – June 5 / Sivan 25**

Tehillim Reading ..... 8:30 am  
Shacharis ..... 10:00 am\*  
Torah Reading ..... 10:50 am  
Rabbi Drasha ..... 11:15 am

Mincha .....8:15 pm  
Rabbi's Drasha.....8:40 pm  
Shabbos Ends .....9:15 pm

\*Latest morning Shema is now **9:07 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 (Sun-Thurs) .....1:45 pm  
Maariv (Sun-Thurs) .....9:15 pm

**Bulletin**  
*This week's Bulletin is sponsored  
by Sholom Silvestri,  
Mortgage Banker.*

## Chassidic Masters

### The Vacuum of Choice

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

On whose initiative were the spies sent? The way the story is told in Numbers, Ch. 13, it was by divine command:

*G-d spoke to Moses, saying: "Send you men, that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel. One man, one man per tribe shall you send, each a prince among them . . ." (Numbers 13:1-2)*

But when Moses recounts these events 40 years later, he tells the people of Israel,

*You all approached me, and said: "Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land and bring us back word regarding the road by which we shall go up and the cities to we shall enter." The thing was favorable in my eyes; and I took twelve men from amongst you, one man per tribe . . . (Deuteronomy 1:22-23)*

The commentaries reconcile these two accounts of the sending of the spies by explaining that the initiative indeed came from the people of Israel. "Moses then consulted with G-d, who said to him, 'Send you men . . .,' to imply: Send them as dictated by your understanding. I am not telling you what to do. Do as you see fit" (Rashi). Thus, the spies' mission, while receiving divine consent, was

a human endeavor, born of the desire of the people and dispatched because "the thing was favorable" in Moses' eyes.

The result was a tragic setback in the course of Jewish history. The spies brought back a most demoralizing report, and caused the people to lose faith in G-d's promise of the Land of Israel as their eternal heritage. The entire generation was then deemed unfit to inherit the land, and it was decreed that they would live out their lives in the desert. Only 40 years later did Moses' successor, Joshua, lead a new generation across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. (Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies to speak in favor of conquering the land, and the only two men of that entire generation to enter it.)

Up until that time, G-d had imparted specific directives to Moses and the people of Israel virtually every step of the way. The case of the spies was the first instance in which G-d said, "I'm not telling you what to do; do as you see fit." Should this not have set off a warning light in the mind of Moses?

Indeed, it did. Our sages tell us that Moses sent off Joshua with the blessing, "May G-d deliver you from the conspiracy of the spies" (Rashi to Numbers 13:16). So why did he send them? And if, for whatever reason, he thought it necessary to send them, why did he not at least bless them as he blessed Joshua? Even more amazing is the fact that a generation later, as the Jewish people finally stood at the ready (for the second time) to enter the land, Joshua dispatches spies!

This time, it works out fine; but why did he again initiate a process which had ended so tragically in the past?

Obviously, Moses was well aware of the risks involved when embarking on a course of "do as you see fit." For man to strike out on his own, without precise instructions from on high, and with only his finite and subjective judgment as his compass, is to enter a minefield strewn with possibilities for error and failure. Yet Moses also knew that G-d was opening a new arena of human potential.

#### Free Choice

A most crucial element of our mission in life is the element of choice. Were G-d to have created man as a creature who cannot do wrong, then He might as well have created a perfect world in the first place, or no world at all. The entire point of G-d's desire in creation is that there exists a non-perfected world, and that we choose to perfect it. It is precisely the possibility for error on our part that lends significance to our achievements.

The concept of choice exists on two levels. When G-d issues an explicit instruction to us, we still have the choice to defy His command. This, however, is choice in a more limited sense. For, in essence, our soul is literally "a part of G-d above" and, deep down, has but a single desire: to fulfill the divine will. In the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: "A Jew is neither willing, nor is he able, to tear himself away from G-d."

*(Continued next page)*

When it comes down to it, each and every one of us desires only to do good, as defined by the will of G-d. The only choice we have is whether to suppress our innate will or to express it in our daily life.

Up until the episode of the spies, this was the only choice offered the Jewish people. G-d provided unequivocal guidelines for each and every issue that confronted their lives. They had the choice to disobey, but to do so would run contrary to their deepest instincts.

The second level of choice was introduced with G-d's reply to Moses regarding the spies. When Moses heard G-d saying, "Do as you see fit," he understood that G-d was opening another, even deeper and truer dimension of choice in the life of man. By creating an area in which He, the creator and absolute master of the world, states, "I am not telling you what to do," G-d was imparting an even greater significance to human actions. Here, and only here, is the choice truly real; here, and only here, is there nothing to compel us in either direction.

When we enter this arena, the risks are greater: the possibility to err is greater, and the consequences of our error more devastating. But when we succeed in discovering, without instruction and empowerment from above, the optimum manner in which to enter the Holy Land and actualize the divine will, our deed is infinitely more valuable and significant.

### **The Self of Joshua**

This was why Moses dispatched the spies, though fully aware of the hazards of their mission, without so much as a blessing that they be safeguarded from the pitfalls of human endeavor. Were he to have blessed them—to have imparted to them of his own spiritual prowess to succeed in their mission—he would have undermined the uniqueness of the opportunity that G-d had granted by consenting that their mission be "by your understanding." The entire point was that both Moses (in deciding whether to send them) and the spies (in executing their mission) be entirely on their own, guided and empowered solely by their own understanding and humanity.

The only one to receive Moses blessing was Joshua, who was Moses' "faithful servant . . . never budging from [Moses'] tent" (Exodus 33:11). The unique relationship between Moses and Joshua is described by the Talmud by the following metaphor: "Moses face was like the face of the sun; Joshua's face was like the face of the moon." On the most basic level, this expresses the superiority of Moses over Joshua, the latter being but a pale reflector of the former's light; on a deeper level, this alludes to the depth of the bond between the greatest of teachers and the most devoted of disciples. As the moon has no luminance of its own, but receives all of its light from the sun, so had Joshua completely abnegated his self to his master, so that everything he had, and everything he was, derived from Moses.

For Moses to bless Joshua was not to empower Joshua with something that was not himself: Joshua's entire self was Moses. Armed with Moses' blessing, Joshua was truly and fully on his own—this was his essence and self, rather than something imposed on him from without.

Thus it was Joshua, who had successfully negotiated the arena of true and independent choice, who led the people of Israel into the land of Canaan. For the conquest of Canaan and its transformation into a "holy land" represents our entry into a place where there are no clearcut divine directives to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong, and our independent discovery of how to sanctify this environment as a home for G-d. ❖

### **Paterson Shul Welcomes David Berman**

The Paterson Shul @Senior Towers of Paterson located at 510 E. 27<sup>th</sup> Street will hold a Minyan at 9:30p.m. this Shabbat, June 5 for Parshat Shelach with a "Welcome Back Berman" Kiddush for David Berman, former Gabbai extraordinaire of the Paterson Minyan and longtime resident of Fair Lawn in the good ole days. With covid restrictions lifted for the vaccinated, attendance is encouraged. For more info, visit:

[www.PatersonShul.com](http://www.PatersonShul.com)  
or contact: [JerrySchranz@gmail.com](mailto:JerrySchranz@gmail.com)

## From Our Sages

### ***They went up . . . and he came unto Hebron (Numbers 13:22)***

*Should it not have read “and they came”? But it was Caleb alone who went to Hebron, to pray at the graves of the Patriarchs that he not be enticed to join in the conspiracy of the spies. Thus it is written (Deuteronomy 1:36), “And to him (Caleb) I shall give the land upon which he trod”; and it says (Judges 1:20): “To Caleb they gave Hebron” (as his portion in the Land of Israel).*

*-- (Rashi; Talmud, Sotah 34b)*

### ***They carried it on a pole, by twos (13:23)***

*They hung it from two poles, each with two men at each end. Thus it required eight men to carry the cluster of grapes; one carried a fig, and one a pomegranate. Joshua and Caleb did not carry back fruit, for the whole purpose of it was to defame the land: as its fruit is abnormal, so are its inhabitants abnormally large and strong.*

*-- (Rashi)*

### ***We came to the land where you sent us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey . . . (13:26)***

*Such is the way of defamers: they start off by saying something good, and conclude by saying evil.*

*Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: Any piece of slander which has not some truth in the beginning, will not endure in the end.*

*-- (Midrash Rabbah; Talmud)*

### ***We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we (13:30)***

*They said this even regarding G-d Himself (the Hebrew word mimenu, “than we,” can also mean “than he”): Even He cannot remove them from there.*

*-- (Talmud; Rashi)*

### ***Let the power of my L-rd be great, as You have spoken, saying: G-d is long-suffering . . . (14:17-18)***

*When Moses ascended to heaven, he found G-d sitting and writing “long-suffering.” Said Moses to G-d: “Master of the Universe! Long-suffering to the righteous?” Said G-d: “Also to the wicked.” Said Moses: “Let the wicked perish!” Said G-d: “See now that you will need this.” When Israel sinned, G-d said to Moses: “Did you not tell Me to be long-suffering only toward the righteous?” Said Moses to Him: “Did You not say to me, ‘Also to the wicked?’”*

*-- (Talmud, Sanhedrin 111a)*

### ***G-d spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them . . . (15:1-2)***

*At that time G-d said to Moses: “Go appease them, the poor fellows, as their heart has departed them.”*

*Said Moses: “Master, how shall I appease them?”*

*Said He: “Appease them with words of Torah: ‘When you come into the Land . . . and you make a fire-offering to G-d . . .’”*

*-- (Seder Eliyahu Rabbah)*

## Haftorah for Shelach 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. ❖

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**Good Shabbos to all!**

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

