

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Sh'lach	29 Jun 2019	26 Sivan 5779	Num. 13:1-15:41	Josh. 2:1-24	Matt.10:1-14

The main theme of this week's Torah portion Shelach is all about the grievous sin of the ten of the twelve spies who went to the Promised Land. Each one is a leader, a prince of his tribe. We learned that this mission was not Hashem's idea, but the desire of the Tribes and Hashem entertained their wishes. Their reports, upon their return, were evil, slanderous, and unfounded negative report which the Children of Yisrael accepted.

The sages taught that since the Children of Yisrael cried for a whole night without reason, Hashem decreed that this entire generation would not enter the land, but only their children whom they feared would be slain, they would enter. When the spies made their report, it was on Tisha B'Av (ninth of Av). On this day, both Temples and many other calamities occurred on this day. All because the Children of Yisrael were goaded on by these men. King David said in Psalms 106:24, "Moreover, they scorned the desirable land, they believed not His word."

The selected spies were righteous leaders. What was the cause that brought death sentence to an entire generation? There are so many different teachings and lessons regarding the sin of the spies. The sages teach that speaking against the Promised Land was more severe in Hashem's eyes than even the idolatry of the Golden Calf which He forgave His people. The sin of the spies was such a serious transgression that it constantly revisits the people of Yisrael and needs rectification in every generation.

When we examine the verses in Numbers Chapter 13, their actions and their statements don't seem to be that bad at all. They travelled throughout the land for 40 days and truthfully reported what they saw. They really saw giants. And everywhere they went, they saw people dying. Rashi said that wherever the spies passed, they found the Canaanites burying the dead. Hashem intended this for good, to keep them [Canaanites] occupied with their mourning so they should not notice them [the spies]. However, it appeared to the spies that the situation in the land was not good. So, why was the punishment so severe for the spies and the Children of Yisrael?

Lashon hara (evil tongue) is not a lie. It is the truth, but from an improper perspective. We read that Yehoshua sent two spies in advance of the Children of Israel. But this time, the story is completely different and so is the ending. The two spies Yehoshua sent, were discovered that very night, and pursued. Even after they were discovered, they completed their mission. Once they returned to the camp, they told the Children of Yisrael that everyone in Canaan is afraid of them and the Land is ripe for taking.

Whereas, in parashat Shelach, the spies spent 40 days in Canaan, took fruits, and yet nobody discovered them. Despite all that, they were convinced and they convinced the nation that they don't have a chance! They were so crestfallen and they convinced of their own defeat in advance!

The Midrash explains that Hashem arranged for the deaths of everyone whenever the spies came to their town. They were so busy burying the dead, they did not pay attention to the spies. That is the reason the spies saw so many funerals taking place everywhere they went. They understood that there was something wrong, but they could not decipher what they saw with their own eyes. They lacked the *emunah* (faith) when they failed to realize it was Hashem helping them. Instead, they returned in a devastated state and they wrought devastation, by saying 'This is a land that devours its inhabitants.' They chose to see the

negative and understood that people were dying because it's a bad land. Because, it is possible to see something and yet understand it completely differently. Example: A crime was committed and it was seen by three witnesses. They were questioned by an investigator to the crime, yet what they describe to the crime is all different. Because, we draw conclusions based on how we perceive and react with the world.

We all have a choice to see good or evil, positive or negative; it all depends on perspective and the way we choose to take things. Hashem arranged amazing Divine Providence for the spies to succeed in their mission. Hashem also gives us our daily Divine Providence. When we open our eyes, that is spiritual eyes, we can see Hashem making miracles for each one of us daily and delivering us from evil. But, like the spies, we can also interpret events and circumstances in a negative light. If we choose to see the bad, then we are stuck in negativity by choice we make. If we choose to see the good in everything, then it will be positive. Because we, each one of us, create our own reality.

The spies recounted everything they saw in the land to the Children of Yisrael. They told them how they saw the Nephilim. They described themselves as seeing themselves as grasshoppers in their own eyes, and in the eyes of those Nephilim as well (Num. 13:32-33). "And we were like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so we were in their eyes." Why does the Torah specify how they felt about themselves, and then go on and tell us how they appeared in the eyes of the Nephilim? How did they know how they appeared in someone else's eyes?

We think of reality as something solid and fixed, and we have no control over it. But the truth is that Torah is teaching us an important lesson here. We can determine the reality of our surroundings. Our perception of the reality, of our surroundings is the reality that we ourselves create based on our own inner world. We dictate our existence by placing the limit on our manifestation as a result of our own disbelief. Every person establishes the pattern of his life which will determine the shape of his reality and that will be the narrative of his life.

A person's fear can shape their reality into a fearful one. In Psalms 121:5, King David says, "YHWH is your guard; YHWH is your shade [shadow] at your right hand." A shadow does what I do, imitating me. This is direct cause and effect. What does this mean about my relationship with Hashem? The Baal Shem Tov explained this as the law of reciprocity, Hashem's governance of 'measure for measure.' We receive back what we do. And everything we do, we really do to ourselves. Because Hashem engages us according to our own narrative.

R' Nachman tells the story: A man says to his friend, 'How are you doing?' And the truth is that things are going pretty well for him, but he says, "Not so good." Hashem looks at him and says 'You think that's not good?! I will show you yet what's not good.' But if he replies despite that things are not going so well for him and he still says, 'Everything is good!' Then Hashem looks at him lovingly and says, 'You think that's good?! I will show you what's good.'

Our thoughts, emotions and inner world cause our surroundings to react. When we think positively, our view of the world is based on the joy of living in Hashem's world and the joy of *emunah*, we receive heavenly aid. *Emunah* means that a person will perceive reality in a more positive light and consequently everything really does change for the better, it's not an illusion.

The spies saw themselves as grasshoppers in the eyes of the giants. This was an illusion of their reality. Through *emunah* in Hashem, the impossible becomes possible. However, we are so used to living in the

negative reality that we've created for ourselves, we can't imagine the other side. Instead, we just live our life of quiet desperation not realizing that an outlook of *emunah* could change the true nature of our lives.

When the spies relate to the Children of Yisrael that they saw the giants, they described how reality appeared to them through their own eyes. Once fear took over, they were convinced that they must look like grasshoppers. And the giants really did see them as grasshoppers, so says their reality. What if they saw themselves as strong and steadfast? The giants would have seen them as such and they would have been in fear of them.

The moment we see ourselves from the perspective that we create ourselves, that is what we broadcast to our environment and that is the frequency that the world around us pick up. The best way to guarantee failure is to believe that you are destined to fail. That negative *emunah* in failure, instead of *emunah* in Hashem, creates the negative reality.

Science now informs us that reality is influenced by intent<sup>1</sup>; quantum physics confirms that consciousness creates reality! For example: "I cannot define the real problem, therefore I suspect there's no real problem, but I'm not sure there's no real problem."<sup>2</sup> Hashem created us all with tremendous potential and we must never give up on ourselves. One thing that the spies teach us is that at the moment we do give up on ourselves, we seal our fate. It is our *emunah* in Hashem that enables us to succeed and bring positive energy into our lives. The more we place our faith in Hashem the more we merit His providence which will direct our lives in positive directions.

R' Nachman declared, "To whatever place I travel, I am travelling to the land of Israel." It is an inner journey of our perception and turn it to form the *emunah* of Hashem from those who attempt to turn us away from Hashem. Hashem who acts as a protective shadow to our right by having faith in Him as He has faith in us is the key to the life of *emunah*. Ask ourselves: Are we grasshoppers? Or are we a man created by Hashem to fulfill His purpose on this world?

We discuss a lot about the spies and Yehoshua, but we don't discuss too much about Kalev. So, who is Kalev and what did he contribute to the Yisraelites? Kalev was born in the year 2408 from Creation (1353 BCE). He was a son of Yefuneh or Chetzron. As we know, he is mentioned as one of the spies who was sent to the Promised Land by Moshe. Then he was sent again as a spy for Yehoshua.

Kalev, according to Scripture is known as the son of Yefuneh (Bemidbar 13-14). And as a son of Chetzron in Dibre Aleph 2, Kalev the Kenizzite (Bemidbar 32:12), and as son of Kenaz (Shophetim 1:13). He is also known as Mered (Dibre Aleph 2), Yesher, Shovav, Ardon (Dibre Aleph 2:18). 'Mered' means 'to rebel' against the spies; 'Yesher' means 'to straighten' as he set straight and did not join in the counsel of the spies; 'Shovav' means 'to break', as he broke away from his evil inclination by rebelling against the spies; 'Ardon' means 'to rule', as he ruled over his evil inclination.

The Talmud<sup>3</sup> explains that his father's name was Chetzron, but his mother remarried and his stepfather's name was Kenaz. Kalev was known as the son of Yefuneh from the root word of "*yefuneh*" means to "turn away", referring to his turning away from his fellow spies.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://upliftconnect.com/the-science-of-intention>

<sup>2</sup> [www.bbc.com/earth/story/20170215](http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20170215), the strange link between the human mind and quantum

<sup>3</sup> BT, Sotah 11b

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

While Yehoshua was given extra protection by Moshe, Kalev had to battle his inner inclinations on his own. It is said that he went to the cave of Machpelah and prayed for protection from the spies. The Chassidic teaches that the 10 spies were not wicked, rather they realized that once they enter the Promised Land, they had to give up their lofty status they received in the desert by doing mundane work. Kalev did not join them, not because he disagreed with them, but rather he understood dedication, loyalty, and subservience to Moshe that was his crowning attributes. As a result, Hashem bestowed on him the title “My servant.” (Bemidbar 14:24)