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OHEL DAVID EASTERN SYNAGOGUE

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Shabbat Shelach Lecha

Sat. 19 - 20 Jun. 2020 - 28th of Sivan, 5780

שבת פ' שלח לך

Issue Number 957

Mevarchin Hahodesh

מברכין החודש

Rosh Hodesh Tamuz on Mon. & Tue. 22-23 Jun.

ראש חודש תמוז ביום שני ושלישי 22-23 יוני.

Shabbat Candles.

21:07

Latest Shema GRA.

8:52

Sunset.

21:09

Arbit Motzei Shabbat.

22:36

Next Friday: Candles. Shabbat. Korach

20:58

THE SYNAGOGUE IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

For further information please contact:

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Shahrit Sunday to Friday on ZOOM at 07:30

Please call Ghassan to join the service

Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag on ZOOM

Sunday to Thursday at 18:00, Friday at 17:00

Please call Ghassan or David to join the Shiur

Shlach: United We Stand; Divided We Fall

Shlach 5780 (Numbers 13-15)

Jun 15, 2020 | by [Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig](#)

GOOD MORNING! As the world continues to slowly open up, we are confronted by the reality that we suddenly find ourselves in summer. Summertime is the time generally set aside for travel and touring, so now's the time to consider what we would like to do now that we

can finally leave our homes. Many families are itching to go somewhere – anywhere.

Did you know that in this week's Torah reading we find the first use of the word "tour"? In this week's portion, Moses sends out twelve "spies" to explore the land of Israel and bring back a reconnaissance report to the Jewish people. The Torah calls this exploration "לתור – to tour" the land; quite literally the same

word in both languages. Thus, to tour really means to explore.

I am reminded of the joke about the tourist who drives along the shore of the Dead Sea and spots a fisherman with his rod casting his line into the water. The tourist, surprised, stops and tries to explain in his broken Hebrew to the fisherman that no fish can possibly live in the Dead Sea. The fisherman says, “Actually, there are fish here. For ten dollars, you may sit next to me and I will show you.”

The curious tourist paid the \$10 and waited patiently. After an hour, the tourist says, “Hey, where are the fish? And by the way, how many fish did you catch today?” The fisherman answers, “You are number six.”

This week’s Torah reading recounts the tragic episode of the twelve spies who were sent by Moses and the Jewish people to reconnoiter the land of Israel and to produce a report on the land and its inhabitants. According to Jewish tradition, ten of the twelve spies conspired as a group to slander the land of Israel. According to some opinions, they were motivated to do so by the fear that they would lose their

positions of leadership when the nation entered the land of Israel. Only Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Yefuneh, refused to participate. The twelve spies spent forty days investigating the land of Israel and upon their return the ten conspirators twisted much of what they observed into a very negative narrative about the land.

Facts can be interpreted in a number of ways. Invariably, when one has an agenda to promote, one way or another the facts will support whatever position one is trying to establish. Unfortunately, we see this constantly from even a casual observation of the different news media outlets. Liberal and conservative media outlets rarely agree as to what is truly newsworthy, however, on the rare occasion that they do, somehow the same event manages to support their own narrative of liberal or conservative fiction. Honest and impartial reporting of the news hasn’t been a reality in a very long time.

So, it should come as no surprise that 3,300 years ago the ten spies used the same device to promote their agenda. Here is what the Torah recounts:

And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them; "Explore the land, what it is, and observe the people who live in it, whether they are strong or weak, few or many. Examine the land that they live in, whether it is good or bad; and the cities in which they live, whether in open encampments, or in fortresses. And what the land is, whether it is fat or lean, whether there is wood in it, or not. Have good courage and bring back some of the fruits of the land" (Numbers 13:17-20).

According to Jewish tradition, much of what they observed they turned into a negative narrative. They started positively enough by talking about a land flowing with milk and honey and they showed off the very impressive fruits that they brought back.

But, they cautioned, the inhabitants of the land are very strong and are living in fortified cities. In order to frighten the nation, they highlighted that enemy nations lived nearby; including one, the Amalekites, who had viciously attacked them the previous year. They recounted seeing scary giants and that the land devours its inhabitants.

(According to the Talmud they had observed many funerals and concluded that the land kills her inhabitants. In truth, God wanted them to be able to travel unhindered and without being observed so He set about distracting the inhabitants.)

Many of the facts were woven together to create a narrative that entering the land of Israel was a suicide mission. As much as Joshua and Caleb tried to dissuade the people from buying into the negative portrayal of the land, they were unable to do so. The Jewish people reacted with horror and desperation and started wailing loudly – and quite astonishingly – concluded that they were better off appointing a new leader and returning to Egypt!

Unsurprisingly, God was very displeased and decreed that entirety of the nation would wander in the desert for forty years (one year for every day that the spies spent in the land) until the entire generation died out. This happened on the 9th of Av, and according to tradition God declared, "You cried on this night for no reason. I will give you a

reason to cry forevermore on this day.”

The 9th of Av is now the anniversary of some of the most horrible things that have happened in Jewish history including the destruction of BOTH temples. Countless other tragic events also occurred on that day, such as on the 9th of Av in 1492 when all Jews of Spain were designated to leave the country.

In 1914, World War I broke out on the 9th of Av when Germany declared war on Russia. This totally disrupted the Jewish communities living between those countries and eventually set the stage for the soon-to-come Holocaust. On the 9th of Av in 1942, the mass deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto began, sending them to Treblinka. The destruction of Warsaw, with its massive infrastructure of Jewish learning and huge Jewish population, has been likened to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. There are many other aspects to the 9th of Av and we will discuss them further in a few weeks, as the date draws nearer.

But here is a fact that is generally unknown and will probably come as a shock to most

readers: The number ten that is the minimum number needed to create a quorum for a “*minyan*” – i.e. the minimum number of men that comprises a “prayer congregation” – was actually derived from the story of the spies. Of course one may, and is in fact encouraged, to pray at any time – even while alone. But there are certain aspects of the prayer service, such as reading from the Torah, that can only be done in a congregational setting of a valid *minyan*.

The Babylonian Talmud (*Megillah* 23b), using the laws of exegesis passed down from Moses, extrapolates the minimum requirement for a congregation. We find in Leviticus, “*And I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel*” (22:32). The same word also appears in the verse: “*Separate yourselves from the midst of the congregation*” (*Numbers* 16: 21).

This word, “*eidah* – congregation” is found as the description of the group of ten spies who rendered a negative report on the land of Israel: “*How long shall I bear with this*

evil congregation which murmur against me?” (Numbers 14:27). Hence, the Talmud derives from here that to sanctify God in a congregation – the congregation must consist of at least 10 men.

Obviously, this needs an explanation. How is it possible or even appropriate, to learn from these self-serving conspirators that the minimum requirement for a congregation is ten men for a valid quorum?

I once heard my father give an illuminating explanation for this. The purpose of a congregation is to be unified as a whole. Just as a parent’s most fervent desire is to see his/her children getting along, so too we know that God wants to see us living in peace with one another. Our rabbis teach us that the reason God destroyed the world during the time of Noah was because the people of the generation were fighting with one another. By contrast, when the world gathered to wage war on God Himself in the generation of the Tower of Babel, God didn’t destroy the people of the time because they were united among themselves – He merely scattered them to the four corners of the earth.

So too here. Even though what the ten spies did was horrific and led to the death of the entire generation over the next forty years, they were working together in unison. We learn from them that the defining aspect of a congregation is to be unified. That is the ultimate definition of what we are to expect from our congregations and – by extension – from our Jewish communities. In this way, we can bring a sense of pride to the Almighty that His children are all working together.



TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK

Shlach, Numbers 13:1 - 15:41

The Jewish people received the Torah on Mt. Sinai and were ready to enter the land of Israel. There was a consensus of opinion amongst the people that we should send spies to see if it was feasible to conquer the Land. Moses knew that the Almighty's promise to give the Land included a guarantee to conquer it. However, one of the principles of life, which we learn from this portion, is: the Almighty allows each of us the free will to go in the direction we choose. Even though one man and the Almighty is a

majority, Moses – by Divine decree – sent out the princes of the tribes (men of the highest caliber) to spy out the land.

Twelve spies were sent. Ten came back with a report of strong fortifications and giants; they rallied the people against going up to the Land. Joshua ben Nun and Calev ben Yefunah (Moses brother-in-law) tried to stem the rebellion, but did not succeed. The Almighty decreed 40 years of wandering in the desert, one year for each day they spied in the land of Israel. This happened on the 9th of Av, a date noted throughout Jewish history for tragedy.

Candle Lighting Times



(or go to <http://www.aish.com/sh/c/>)

Jerusalem 7:12
 Miami 7:56 - Guatemala 6:15 - Hong Kong 6:52
 Honolulu 6:57 - Johannesburg 5:06 - Los Angeles 7:49
 London 9:06 - Melbourne 4:49 - Mexico City 7:59
 New York 8:12 - Singapore 6:53 - Toronto 8:44
 Moscow 8:59

“Quote of the Week”

**Alone we can do so little;
 together we can do so much.**



In loving memory of
 Rabbi Kalman Packouz
 Kalman Moshe ben
 Reuven Avigdor
 1950-2019
Shabbat Shalom,
 Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig

THE KEHILLA WISHES חיים ארוכים “LONG LIFE” TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE YAHRZEIT

1 Tammuz Mr Sami Shemie	17 Tammuz Dr Y. Kelly Saltoun
7 Tammuz Mr Raphael Mansour	19 Tammuz Mr Moshe Moses
8 Tammuz Mr Fred Dalah	23 Tammuz Mr Charlie Morris
8 Tammuz Mr Andrew Dalah	27 Tammuz Mr Cesar Sassoon
12 Tammuz Mrs Mozel Gubbay	

**EACH ONE OF US IS A SOUL IN THE SYMPHONY OF THE
UNIVERSE LEARN TO CRY LAUGH AND DANCE IN THE
GAME OF LIFE**

SUNDAY 21ST JUNE 7PM

JOIN PROF ELIYAHU KELMAN AT OHEL DAVID TALK
STREAMED ON ZOOM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

JUST CLICK ON THE LINK

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81705442342?pwd=ZDJ6dkVBUktiQTN0
SmdNdjU2N1paQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81705442342?pwd=ZDJ6dkVBUktiQTN0SmdNdjU2N1paQT09)

Meeting ID: 817 0544 2342

Password: 165934

You can ask questions on whatsapp +44 744 929 2497

