

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

SHELAH

JUNE 18, 2011 16 SIVAN 5771

DEDICATIONS: Happy 97th Birthday to Mr Sam Zalta our #1 Fan
May Hashem bless you with 120 years of health, peace, prosperity and happiness

Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach Notes

Check out our newly launched website at www.benaiaasher.org It is still being developed and we are seeking volunteers to assist with writing and editing. Thank you to Karen Cohn for all your hard work!

Mincha at 7:00 - Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat and Arbit
Candle Lighting: 8:10PM

Shabbat Day Shaharith: 9:00 AM

Children's Shabbat morning program 10:45 - 11:45 a.m. There'll be a smorgasbord of Tefila, Parsha, Stories and Snacks! Coordinated by Orah Burstyn with the assistance of Riki Waldman
Father's day Kiddush – Looking for sponsors at \$52 each in honor of your dad!

Fun at the Rec: We have reserved the Rec for Shabbat afternoon fun in the sun.

Meet at the Colish's 167 National Blvd at 2:45

“Just the Girls” hangout at Leah Colish's house Shabbat Afternoon, BYOG (Bring. Your. Own. Game.)

Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Aharon Siegel 6:30

Lights Camera Action! Benai Asher Acting Club – practice for our first show us underway. 6:30

Mincha at 7:20 followed by Seudah Shelishi –And a class –

The Stars don't shine when the Sun is out – Moses, Joshua and Bnai Yisrael 8:00

Learn to Read From The Torah 8:00

Arbit at 9:00 followed by Havdalah – Shabbat ends at 9:10

Sunday Shaharit at 8:00 AM – Followed breakfast and our Tefilah Class at 8:45

And Shaharit Daily at 7:00 AM (preceded by a class at 6:30)

We are gathering birthdays for our first Hebrew Birthday Bash to celebrate together as one extended family. If you'd like to be involved, please send your English birthday to Rebecca Ovadia uft183@yahoo.com

This Tuesday night we continue our “Weekly Women's Workshop” 9:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. with different guest speakers each week. Coordinated by Leah Colish (516-589-6263).

We want to thank the Seigals, Burstyns, Colishs, Freidens, Zakais and everybody else who made our ice skating event a success!

“Rockin' Recording Studio Tour” Sunday June 26th from 4-6 PM. Come tour Michael Wagner's recording studio, learn the ropes, record live music and have a blast! Ages 9-18. Sponsored by Michael Wagner.

If you have not sent back your membership dues please do so promptly. If you did not receive the letter please speak with Ely, Hal or Ida.

Project Inspire comes to Long Beach! Project Inspire is a grassroots movement whose goal is to unify the Jewish People. Project Inspire encourages Jews to share the beauty and wisdom of Judaism with their fellow Jews by providing easy and inspiring ways to reach out as well as the tools and understanding on how to reach out.

Whether friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers- we all know people with whom we can share the sweetness of Jewish living. Our united efforts, with Hashem's help, will be the seeds to infuse light, love and inspiration to all of Am Yisrael. To learn more, visit www.projectinspire.com.

If you're interested in attending the Long Beach Project Inspire Seminar in the coming weeks, please contact Shlomo (Jervv) Colish icolish@aol.com

please reply to
ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com

Manhattan Minha Minyan – 985
 Third Avenue – between 58th and
 59th – 4PM Mon – Thurs
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Editors Notes

My daughter Mikhayla asked me a question tonight. She asked me to name the 12 spies. Like almost all of you, I could only name two, Yehoshua and Caleb. She suggested that in remembering people, those who do good in life leave an impression that far outweighs those who do bad. Of course there are exceptions, but we see in our daily lives that it's true, even in the secular world.

When considering the spies, what separated the two from the ten was attitude and outlook. Rabbi Mordechai Dixler reminded me of a story this evening. It was a story that Rabbi Abittan loved to tell.

Rabbi Eliezer Silver zt"l was a leader and activist who saved thousands of Jewish lives during the Holocaust. After the liberation of the Nazi death camps, he tried to revive the spirit of Judaism among the survivors.

One of his many activities was organizing prayer services. A certain refugee refused to participate, explaining that he'd been turned off to Judaism forever. He said that there had been a religious Jew in this refugee's camp who had smuggled in a Siddur (prayer book), and he would charge people half their bread ration to use his Siddur for ten minutes. After witnessing such cruelty, the refugee refused to have anything to do with Siddurim, prayer services, or anything Jewish.

Rabbi Silver approached him with great compassion and understanding, but offered him a new perspective. "You only see the Jew who was so cruel," he said. "What about the holy Jews who were willing to give up half their meager rations for just 10 minutes with a Siddur?"

No one can blame the refugee for his feelings. After living through his hellish experience, who could say they would react any differently? Nonetheless, says Rabbi Shimshon Pincus zt"l, two people can hear the same story and one notices the cruelty, while the other notices the holiness and dignity.

Rabbi Dixler went on to explain that the Sages say that what the eye sees depends on what the heart feels (Talmud Avoda Zara 28b), and in this week's Torah Portion (Num. 15:39) we're told "Don't stray after your heart and after your eyes." Our eyes will only see negativity and impurity if our hearts have already been corrupted. If we make the effort to turn our hearts towards positivity, giving to others, appreciating, then the world will transform before our eyes into a panorama of pleasures and joy, the constant gifts that G-d wishes upon us.

What an incredible statement the Talmud brings in stating that what the eye sees depends on what the heart feels. I used this statement ten years ago in a series of classes Rabbi Abittan had me prepare and give after I discussed with him Stephen Covey's book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. We looked at the Seven habits from a Torah perspective.

Many people often lament that because of the situation, they couldn't control themselves. They excuse themselves saying that their emotions took over. But

Stephen Covey tells a short story that shows we really are masters of our emotion. Its not the situation that changes us. Its how we look at the situation. And when we can change that perspective, we experience a paradigm shift.

"I remember a mini-Paradigm Shift I experienced one Sunday morning on a subway in New York. People were sitting quietly - some reading newspapers, some lost in thought, some resting with their eyes closed. It was a calm, peaceful scene. Then suddenly, a man and his children entered the subway car. The children were so loud and rambunctious that instantly the whole climate changed.

"The man sat down next to me and closed his eyes, apparently oblivious to the situation. The children were yelling back and forth, throwing things, even grabbing people's papers. It was very disturbing. And yet, the man sitting next to me did nothing.

"It was difficult not to feel irritated. I could not believe that he could be so insensitive to let his children run wild like that and do nothing about it, taking no responsibility at all. It was easy to see that everyone else on the subway felt irritated, too. So finally, with what I felt was unusual patience and restraint, I turned to him and said, "Sir, your children are really disturbing a lot of people. I wonder if you couldn't control them a little more?"

"The man lifted his gaze as if to come to a consciousness of the situation for the first time and said softly, 'Oh, you're right. I guess I should do something about it. We just came from the hospital where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what to think, and I guess they don't know how to handle it either.'

"Can you imagine what I felt at that moment? My paradigm shifted. Suddenly I saw things differently, I felt differently, I behaved differently. My irritation vanished. I didn't have to worry about controlling my attitude or my behavior; my heart was filled with the man's pain. Feelings of sympathy and compassion flowed freely. "Your wife just died? Oh, I'm so sorry. Can you tell me about it? What can I do to help?" Everything changed in an instant.

"Many people experience a similar fundamental shift in thinking when they face a life-threatening crisis and suddenly see their priorities in a different light, or when they suddenly step into a new role, such as that of husband or wife, parent or grandparent, manager or leader.

"It becomes obvious that if we want to make relatively minor changes in our lives, we can perhaps appropriately focus on our attitudes and behaviors. But if we want to make significant, quantum change, we need to work on our basic paradigms.

Its interesting that the ten spies who we don't remember saw exactly the same things as the two we do remember. Its not what they saw, but how they saw it.

The Zohar tells us of an incredible spiritual energy which comes from the land. Apparently it was too much for the ten and clouded their vision, while Yehoshua and Caleb remained clear.

There is a lesson to us. We need to constantly remind ourselves that although some say seeing is believing, the fact remains that what the eye sees depends on what the heart feels. Lets work on keeping our hearts in the right place. Shabbat Shalom,
David Bibi

The Weekly Torah Reading: By Rabbi Aron Tendler

1st Aliya: Moshe sends the Spies on their mission.

2nd Aliya: The Spies return carrying the massive fruits of the land. They deliver their negative report and the nation loses its faith in G-d and Moshe.

3rd Aliya: Moshe successfully argues for the life of the nation, and Hashem issues the 40 year decree of wandering and dying.

4th Aliya: The Spies die, and the nation is informed of their own punishment.

5th Aliya: The laws of the Mincha - meal offering are stated.

6th Aliya: The laws of separating Challah - the dough offering, and the communal sin offering are stated.

7th Aliya: The individual sin offering; the incident with the man who transgressed Shabbos by gathering sticks; his punishment; and the Mitzvah of Tzitzit, conclude the Parsha.

Yehoshua 2:1 - This week's Haftorah relates the story of Yehoshua sending Kalev and Pinchas to spy out Yericho, their encounter with Rachav, and their report confirming the fear of Yericho's inhabitants. The connection to our Parsha is obvious, however the outcome of this "second mission" was far different than the first one 38 years earlier. The year was 2488 -1273 b.c.e.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"They brought forth an evil report on the land that they had spied out."(Bemidbar 13:32)

In the story of the spies and their evil report lies a great fundamental teaching regarding lashon hara. Rashi on this verse explains that the spies saw many things. Everything that they saw happening was orchestrated by Hashem for their benefit. Hashem worked it out that the people in the land would be busy with burying their dead in order to distract them from noticing the spies. How did they interpret it? The land is a land that devours its inhabitants. It's a bad place because many people are dying! Hashem showed them the beautiful fruits of the land. They said the fruits are strange. This is the power of lashon hara, to find the bad side of something and ignore the good side.

There is a well-known parable of the Hobot Halebabot (6:16). "It was said about one pious man who passed a dead carcass of a dog. His students told him, 'How terrible is the odor of that carcass!' He answered them, 'How white are its teeth!' And the students regretted that they spoke negatively of the carcass." When you first read this story you probably are thinking that the saddik also smelled the terrible smell but he wanted to teach them how to talk, but to think this way is not understanding the point of the Hobot Halebabot. The saddik walked down the street and saw a carcass with nice white teeth! This is all that he saw!

Now, if you can't believe this, take an every day example: a mother changing her baby's diaper. You never saw her changing the baby with one hand and the other hand holding her nose. She doesn't notice the smell. She knows there is a smell, but she doesn't pay any attention to it. Why? Because that is her sweet baby!

It's the same with Hashem He doesn't see bad in us. The Hafess Hayim writes that if not for lashon hara, Hashem would not see evil in any Jew. The only reason that there is sickness, accidents, poverty, is because people speak lashon hara. Does that mean Hashem doesn't see a Jew riding a car on Shabbat? No, he only sees his white teeth. He says, "Remember how nicely he prayed a year ago!" The only problem is that Hashem runs this world like a human judge in a courtroom. Hashem wants to forgive but there are prosecutors that talk when people talk lashon hara. Hashem says, "I have no choice, but it is what people are saying so I must exact punishment from this man." Let us hope with the merit of being careful Hashem will bless all of us and all of Israel.
Rabbi Reuven Semah

"You shall not explore after your heart and after your eyes."
(Bemidbar 15:39)

In the third chapter of the Shema, which is found at the end of this perashah, we read the commandment, "You shall not follow your heart and eyes." Indeed, this is one of the 613 misvot, and this commands us not to look at people who are exposed indecently, or pictures thereof. The interesting thing to note is that first it says not to follow our heart, and then our eyes, when in reality we would assume that we first see with our eyes, and then our hearts act upon it.

The Rabbis teach us that from here we see an amazing thing: the eye only sees what the heart wants it to see. If a person doesn't care what he looks at, meaning his heart has given him carte blanche to see whatever it desires, then his eyes will find many forbidden things to look at.

If, however, his heart dictates that he shouldn't see immodesty, he will be able to watch his eyes from straying after those very things. He will be on guard not to let images which are suggestive of immorality come his way. So truth be told, his heart must come first, and then his eyes will follow the proper guidelines.

This is extremely important in this kind of weather, when the streets are full of people who are not dressed properly. If we put in our heart that we only want to see the proper things, our eyes will not stray where they should not, and Hashem will protect us in this very area. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR **The Halachot of Crying**

Parashat Shelah tells the tragic story of the Meragelim, the spies that Moshe sent to explore Eretz Yisrael in advance of the nation's entry into the land. The spies returned with a negative report, and discouraged Beneh Yisrael from proceeding into the land. The night after the spies' return, the nation wept, lamenting the fate that awaited them. God punished Beneh Yisrael for their response to the spies. He had promised to bring them to a special land, and they should have thus rejected the spies' report, rather than accepting it and lamenting their imminent entry into the land. God therefore decreed that this generation would die in the wilderness, and not enter into Eretz Yisrael.

The Rabbis teach us that this tragic episode actually yielded even graver repercussions. This incident occurred on the night of Tisha B'Ab, which, as we know, is a day that has seen numerous catastrophes throughout Jewish history. After Beneh Yisrael spent the night of Tisha B'Ab weeping in response to the spies' report,

God announced, "You cried for naught – I will now establish this night as an occasion of crying for all generations." Sure enough, Tisha B'Ab would later become the day on which both Bateh Mikdash were destroyed, and the day of numerous other tragedies in our history.

God's response to the people's weeping presents us with a critical lesson for life. It warns us against crying "for naught." God was angered because of the "Bechiya Shel Hinam," Beneh Yisrael's unwarranted weeping. They were receiving an unparalleled blessing, a priceless treasure – Eretz Yisrael – and yet they wept, they complained. When people cry "for naught," for no valid reason, God becomes angry, and says, "You're crying for no reason – I will give you something to cry about," Heaven forbid. If we – like the generation of the spies – reject the gifts God gives us, and cry and complain, then He may likely give us a valid reason to cry.

There are, of course, situations where crying is allowed and even appropriate. When a person loses a relative or close friend, Heaven forbid, crying over the loss is most certainly appropriate. A grieving relative should never be discouraged from crying. Certainly, on the opposite end, shedding tears of joy and gratitude is a perfectly acceptable expression of emotion. And when we pray for our children, we must never feel the need to hold back our tears. God treasures the tears we shed out of concern for the wellbeing of our children, and those tears are very precious.

But there are many other instances of crying that fall into the category of "Bechiya Shel Hinam" – unwarranted crying, when people cry over "problems" that are actually blessings, like

Beneh Yisrael's weeping upon hearing the spies' report.

I was once summoned to settle a tense dispute between a husband and wife regarding their children's education. They couldn't agree over which school to choose for their child, as one spouse wanted a school with stricter religious standards and the other wanted a school with less strict standards. The husband and wife were literally driven to tears by this argument. The question of which school to choose is certainly a crucial and sensitive one, but it does not warrant crying. How many unmarried people, and childless couples, dream about having such an argument! How many parents are there with a gravely ill child, Heaven forbid, who wish they had the luxury of arguing over where to send him to school! Is this something to cry about? Baruch Hashem, this couple had happy, healthy children, and they had the ability to enroll their children in a variety of fine Torah institutions. It is a Beracha to be able to have such an argument! They should have felt blessed to have to make a decision between different Torah schools for their children, notwithstanding the challenge presented by the difference of opinion. Certainly, this is an important question that needs to be discussed and addressed with seriousness. But we have to be very careful what we cry about. If we cry about these "problems," we run the risk of confronting far more serious problems, God forbid.

On another occasion, I was asked to mediate between a husband and wife who were embroiled in a bitter argument over...a couch. The husband did not like the couch the wife chose for their living room. Again, the argument brought them to tears. Baruch Hashem, this couple was able to

afford nice furniture. There is no need to cry or lament in this situation. This is a "Bechiya Shel Hinam" – weeping for no reason, bemoaning a situation that is actually a blessing and a gift.

Even with regard to mourning a loved one's passing, it may surprise some to know that there are Halachot governing crying. Halacha requires gradually decreasing the intensity of bereavement with time, and mourning is to end after the Sheloshim (the first month after the loved one's passing), or twelve months, in the case of a parent, Heaven forbid. If one continues grieving after this point, the Sages teach us, God becomes angry. It is natural – and obligatory – to cry and mourn for a personal loss, but at a certain point, one must accept God's decree and move on.

The message of Beneh Yisrael's "Bechiya Shel Hinam" is that even crying, our emotional response to situations, is governed by Halacha. Overreacting to adversity reflects a lack of appreciation for all we have been given, for the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us. Life is full of challenges, and our job is to confront them to the best of our ability, without crying over or lamenting our condition. We should feel blessed and privileged to have challenges to confront, and must ensure to appreciate our blessings, and give thanks to the Almighty – rather than cry about them.

Rabbi Wein Jewish Sovereignty in the Land of Israel

I have often felt and even publicly stated that the relationship of Jews to the Land of Israel, just as their relationship to the Torah itself, is the litmus test of being Jewish – not necessarily strict

fulfillment of observances per se but being Jewish and faithful to one's people. It is ironic in the extreme that the two noisiest factions within the Jewish world today – the leftist, liberal and completely acculturated section of Jewish society on one hand and some of the rigorously observant section of Orthodoxy on the other - are both in agreement that Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel is somehow not a good thing for Jews or the world generally.

Apparently opposition to the State of Israel makes for strange bedfellows. There are many conflicting causes to this state of affairs. But the bottom line is always the bottom line – opposition to the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish state.

This week's parsha with its description of the bitter opposition by the leaders of the tribes of Israel in the desert to the planned entry of the Jewish people into the Land of Israel points out how this attitude of negativism spelled tragedy for the entire people of that generation.

Midrash and Talmud advance compelling arguments as to what these leaders thought and how they justified their error to themselves. But again, righteous self justification is not a valid reason for standing in opposition to Jewish control over the Land of Israel. Lack of faith, lack of judgment, personal conflicts of interest, fear of the unknown, misplaced theology and the inertia of exile all combined to push these previously great leaders of Israel over the brink of rebellion and despair. This week's parsha is one of the saddest in the entire Torah.

The idea of the importance of avoiding slander and not speaking evil about others is

expanded in this week's parsha to include the prohibition of slandering the Land of Israel as well. Just as evil speech is forbidden even if it be true but is of no purposeful or permitted purpose, so too does this injunction against evil speech apply to the Land of Israel.

The Land of Israel is an inanimate object not capable of feeling the hurt that evil speech causes when directed against fellow human beings. Nevertheless, such speech against it is forbidden for it damages the speaker and not only the object about which he or she spoke..

In last week's parsha we read about Miriam and Aaron speaking about Moshe. If the greatest people of Israel fall victim to engaging in such speech then others feel a right to do so as well, as this week's parsha makes clear. Israeli governmental policies can be scrutinized and criticized. Leadership can be challenged and changed. But the basic right of the Jewish people to live in the Land of Israel under Jewish sovereignty is not given to discussion and argument. I think that this is the clear message to be derived from even a cursory reading of this week's parsha.

**Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky -
Parsha Parables
Source of Inspiration**

Sad News. At least that's what ten of the twelve spies brought when they returned from their forty-day sojourn to the Land of Canaan and somehow they turned an enthusiastic nation, ready to enter the land of Canaan into a confused cacophony of complainers, ready for a rambunctious rebellion against Moshe, Ahron, and their Creator. What should have been an easy mission of assurance -- confirming what they were

already told by their forebears, as well as the Almighty -- Eretz Yisrael is a beautiful land that flows with milk and honey, turned into disaster. But there was one saving grace. Actually two. Calev and Yehoshua. While the rest of the spies gave foreboding news, claiming that the land was not good and that there were dangerous giants living there who would crush them, Calev and Yehoshua defended it.

The spies actually began on a positive note. "We came unto the land where you sent us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." Once they captured their attention, they turned the tide. "However, the people who inhabit the land are mighty, and the cities are extremely huge and fortified, and there we saw even the offspring of the giant. and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the south land, while the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountainous region. The Canaanites dwell on the coast and alongside the Jordan."

Calev, however tried a different strategy. "He stilled the people toward Moshe, and said: "We should go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

But the men that went up with him said: "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than us" (See Numbers 13:25-31).

It seems a bit odd. What was Calev's strategy in trying to turn the people toward Moshe? Moshe was not there in the Land of Israel. He did not accompany the spies. Why didn't Calev argue himself, and say, "They are wrong! I was there! I saw it! It is

good!" What does it mean "Caleb silenced the people to Moshe"?

What did Moshe have to do with it?

The Story: My dear friend and colleague, Yated columnist, Rabbi Avraham Birnbaum, tells the story of my wife's grandfather, Rabbi Laizer Levin, Chief Rabbi of Detroit for close to 50 years." Joel Brodman was a full time student in a Detroit area university, at least until he met Rabbi Eliezer Levin, of blessed memory. Rabbi Levin had a serious talk with the Joel and implored him to spend six months learning Torah in the Telshe Yeshiva in Chicago, where Rabbi Levin's son Rav Avraham Chaim was and still is the Rosh Yeshiva.

Joel Brodman broached the new of his plans to his dean but it got the dean was quite upset. "Why would you want to do that? You are in the middle of a serious university program, why would you want to waste your time with a Yeshiva?" But Brodman did not argue. He told the dean that he met Rabbi Levin who had insisted that he to go to the Yeshiva, and he could not just turn him down.

"Who is this Rabbi to send you off for a six month hiatus? Does he understand how this interruption will affect your education and your career plans? Give me his number and I will explain it to him."

Joel gave the dean the number of the Rabbi and left it at that. The dean never got back to Joel, and Joel never got back to the dean. He ended up going to the yeshiva, and eventually became a successful member of the Torah community.

Six years after the incident, Joel, now Yoel Mordechai Brodman, was visiting Israel, when he entered a seforim store in the

Geulah section of Jerusalem. The proprietor was definitely an American, but it was a bit hard to tell because of the man's long beard and large yarmulka. But one word out of the man's mouth convinced Yoel at the same time it shocked him.

"Brodman!" the man shouted across the room. "Remember me?" Brodman shook his head. He did not. "Take off the beard and yarmulka. Look again!" Brodman still did not have a clue.

"Joel Brodman! Look at me! I was the dean of your college! I was the one who wanted to stop you from going to Yeshiva! We never met after you left, but I took your advice and I called Rabbi Levin. He invited me to his home where I spent four hours." He paused. "And here I am."

The Message: Perhaps Calev knew the secret, the greatest key to a successful argument is turning the antagonist to your Rebbe. Calev saw he was being pounced upon and thus he turned the nation toward Moshe. Unfortunately, we do not see that the nation spoke to Moshe to discuss the issue at hand. Calev and Yehoshua were not a match for the lies of the other spies. But who knows what would have happened if the nation would have spent four hours hearing Moshe's side of the story. Maybe there would have been many more men behind the counters of seforim stores in Jerusalem.

**Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi
What Made Joshua and Caleb
Different?**

The spies sent by Moses to explore the land came back with a wholly misleading report. They said "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we . . . The land

through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature" (Num. 13: 31-32).

In fact, as we later discover in the book of Joshua, the inhabitants of the land were terrified of the Israelites. When Joshua sent spies to Jericho, Rahab told them "A great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you." When the people heard what G-d had done for the Israelites, "our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you" (Josh. 2: 9-11).

The spies should have known this. They themselves had sung at the Red Sea: "The people of Canaan melted away; terror and dread fell upon them" (Ex. 15: 15-16). The spies were guilty of an attribution error, assuming that others felt as they did. They said, "We were like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so we were in their eyes" (Num. 13: 33). But as the Kotzker Rebbe noted, they were entitled to make the first claim but not the second. They knew how they felt. They had no idea how the people of the land felt. They were terrified of the Canaanites and failed to see that the Canaanites were terrified of them.

But there are two obvious questions: First, why did ten spies make this mistake? Second, why did two of them, Joshua and Caleb, not make it? Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck has written a fascinating book, *Mindset*,^[i] on why some people fulfil their potential, while others do not. Her interest, she says, was aroused when she observed the behaviour of 10-year-old children when given puzzles to solve. Some, when the puzzles became difficult, thrived.

They relished the challenge, even when it proved too hard for them. Others became anxious. When the puzzles became hard, they were easily discouraged.

She wanted to understand why. What makes the difference between people who enjoy being tested and those who don't? What makes some people grow through adversity while others become demoralized? Her research drove her to the conclusion that it is a matter of mindset. Some see their abilities as given and unalterable. We just are gifted or ordinary, and there is not much we can do about it. She calls this the "fixed" mindset.

Others believe that we grow through our efforts. When they fail they don't define this as failure but as a learning experience. She calls this the "growth" mindset.

Those with a fixed mindset tend to avoid difficult challenges because they fear failure. They think it will expose them as inadequate. So they are reluctant to take risks. They play it safe.

People with the growth mindset react differently. "They don't just seek challenge, they thrive on it. The bigger the challenge, the more they stretch." When do people with the fixed mindset thrive? "When things are safely within their grasp. If things get too challenging . . . they lose interest."

Parents can do great damage to their children, she says, when they tell them they are gifted, clever, talented. This encourages the child to believe that he or she has a fixed quantum of ability. This discourages them from risking failure. Such children say things like, "I often feel that my parents won't value me if I'm not as successful as they would like."

Parents who want to help their children should, she says, praise them not for their ability but for their effort, their willingness to try hard even if they fail. A great basketball coach used to say to his players, "You may be outscored, but you will never lose." If they gave of their best, they might lose the game but they would gain and grow. They would be winners in the long run.

The fixed mindset lives with the constant fear of failure. The growth mindset doesn't think in terms of failing at all.

Apply this logic to the spies and we see something fascinating. The Torah describes them in these words: "All were men [of standing]; they were heads of the Israelites" (13: 3). They were people with reputations to guard. Others had high expectations of them. They were princes, leaders, men of renown. If Dweck is right, people laden with expectations tend to be risk-averse. They do not want to be seen to fail. That may be why they came back and said, in effect: We cannot win against the Canaanites. Therefore we should not even try.

There were two exceptions, Caleb and Joshua. Caleb came from the tribe of Judah, and Judah, we learn in the book of Bereishit, was the first baal teshuvah. Early in life he had been the one who proposed selling Joseph into slavery. But he matured. He was taught a lesson by his daughter-in-law, Tamar. He confessed, "She is more righteous than I am." That experience seems to have changed his life. Later, when the viceroy of Egypt (Joseph, not yet recognised by the brothers) threatens to hold Benjamin as a prisoner, Judah offers to spend his life as a slave so that his brother can go free. Judah is the clearest example in Bereishit of someone who takes adversity as

a learning experience rather than as failure. In Dweck's terminology, he had a growth mindset. Evidently he handed on this trait to his descendants, Caleb among them.

As for Joshua, the text tells us, specifically in the story of the spies, that Moses had changed his name. Originally he was called Hoshea, but Moses added a letter to his name (Num. 13: 16). A change of name always implies a change of character or calling. Abram became Abraham. Jacob became Israel. When our name changes, says Maimonides, it is as if we or someone else were saying, "You are not the same person as you were before" (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 2: 4). Anyone who has experienced a name-change has been inducted into a growth mindset.

People with the growth mindset do not fear failure. They relish challenges. They know that if they fail, they will try again until they succeed. It cannot be coincidence that the two people among the spies who had the growth mindset were also the two who were unafraid of the risks and trials of conquering the land. Nor can it be accidental that the ten others, all of whom carried the burden of people's expectations (as leaders, princes, men of high rank) were reluctant to do so.

If this analysis is correct, the story of the spies holds a significant message for us. G-d does not ask us never to fail. He asks of us that we give of our best. He lifts us when we fall and forgives us when we fail. It is this that gives us the courage to take risks. That is what Joshua and Caleb knew, one through his name change, the other through the experience of his ancestor Judah.

Hence the paradoxical but deeply

liberating truth: Fear of failure causes us to fail. It is the willingness to fail that allows us to succeed.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"And now let the power of Hashem be great, as You spoke saying:" (14:17) "Hashem, slow to anger, and great in kindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression..." (14:18)

"The power of Hashem" means the glory of Hashem's name among men. Why is the greatness of Hashem's name called in the verse "the power of Hashem"? This is because the power of Hashem is demonstrated by His kindness to His people Israel.

Thus the second Beracha in the Amidah is named 'Gevurot' ("Mightiness") and begins with the words "You are mighty". The following words speak entirely of Hashem's Kindness, "You revive the dead, You are great to help, You cause the wind to blow and You bring down the rain, You supply the needs of the living with kindness..."

Thus all the kindness which Hashem's world offers to men is a demonstration of the Power of Hashem. And a demonstration that all of His Power is for Kindness ("great to help"-*rav le'hosheea*) Actually, Hashem did not need Moshe's urging, and His granting of forgiveness (14:20) would have been forthcoming without Moshe's intercession. Hashem knows that His Name is aggrandized in the world because of His kindness to Israel. But here the opportunity was offered to Moshe to enunciate this principle and to elevate Moshe for his devotion to Hashem's glory and for his devotion to Hashem's people.