

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

SHELAH

Rosh Hodesh Tamuz will be celebrated on Wednesday & Thursday, June 20 & 21.
JUNE 15-16, 2012 26 SIVAN 5772

Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach Schedule and Announcements
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Mazal tov to Moses Bibi, Ben Dahan, Daniella Ostrovsky, Riki Waldman and Gaby Yusupov on their middle school graduation. Mazal tov to Gaby Yusupov on receiving the Keter Shem Tov award and to Moses Bibi for winning to NY State Comptroller's Award for academic excellence and community leadership.

We look forward to Aliza and Ephraim Bulow visiting with us this Shabbat

Friday Night: Candles: 8:09PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:00 PM

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM
Please say Shemah at home by 8:15 AM

Kiddush Celebrating Dan and Daniella Kahen Sponsors include: Mr. and Mrs. Jack Azizo, Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Mizrahi, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Yusupov, Mr. David Pinto, Mr. Ronen Yadgarov, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Yadgarov. Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Levi, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Yusupov, Mr. and Mrs. Greg Safaniev, Mr. and Mrs. Steward Austin, George and Sofia Davydov, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Sutton.

Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Aharon at 6:40 PM –
Childrens program at 6:40 with Rabbi Colish followed by

Minha: 7:20 PM

Seudah Shelishi and a Class 8:00 – With Rabbi David ... Why are we always justifying?

Evening Service (Arbith): 9:00 PM - Shabbat Ends: 9:08PM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00,
It seems Sunday, when almost everyone is around is the hardest day to get ten to come on time
Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Kosher Kitchen 9:30 to be confirmed

6:30 AM class – Shelah Hakadosh on the Perasha

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yanai – Mincha 7:30 followed by class at 8PM – Thanks Greg & Boris Safaniev

Men's Halacha Class Tuesday Nights 8:30-10:30: Basar BeChalav – With Michael and David

Hebrew Reading Crash Course Starting Monday June 18th in the Study 8-9 PM and continuing Monday Nights throughout the Summer. Beginner and intermediate levels welcome!

Ladies Shabbat Class at the home of Tina Lemberger – each Shabbat at 5:30 ALIZA BULLOW THIS SHABBAT

Daniel Wagner will be running a volleyball club every Sunday morning on the beach for kid Starts this Sunday 17th. 9:30 - 11:30. ages 6-18. All summer long. Speak to Yosef or Dan to sign up.

Free Great adventure trip will be on the 25th of June. Speak to Yosef or Sam to signup, sponsor or to volunteer. Must sign up by this Shabbat.

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EDITORS NOTES:

A cute story to start. I had the pleasure of attending a magnificent wedding on Sunday night at the Waldorf for Elliott and Rose Chehebar. Although there were many rabbis in attendance, at the last minute Rabbi Eli Mansour was asked to speak. And as usual he did not disappoint, even with no preparation.

His opening story is worth telling as it makes a great wedding or sheva berachot "vort" and I had never heard it told this way.

We know at the wedding, the groom is considered a king and the bride is considered a queen. We also know that Jewish law as dictated by the Shulchan Aruch tells us that upon seeing a King of the Nations of the world, one must recite the blessing, "who has given from His glory to (humans of) flesh and blood".

So the question is asked. When we encounter a groom, we encounter a king, why don't we make the blessing.

Rabbi Mansour related the famous question that was posed to Rav Ovadia Yosef by a person attending the Aqaba summit in 1994 where he saw at the same time President Bill Clinton, King Hussein and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The person asked whether he needed to make the blessing upon seeing any or all of these leaders. R. Ovadia advised

as follows: Although President Clinton was the man leading the most powerful nation on the planet, the answer was no. And although Prime Minister Rabin was the leader of the government of the State of Israel, again the answer was no. With regard to King Hussein though, it didn't matter that Jordan was akin to a third world country with no resources or economic power. While President Clinton and Prime Minister Rabin could be overruled by their respective congress or parliaments, only King Hussein had the power to do whatever he wanted within his nation without regard to due process...and thus only he was a true King.

Rabbi Mansour continued. Before the wedding, the groom really is in charge of his own world. He decides, what, where, when and how. But as soon as he gets married, he has to check with his wife. And as we all know, like a president or prime minister can be overruled by Congress or Parliament, this king like groom finds that this is his reality too. Thus, no Kingly blessing over him.

Now to this week's article ...

Know Thyself

Are you honest? When posed with this question, how many of us would immediately answer yes? And if not yes, almost all of us might say, "well usually and when not we have a good overriding reason".

What if we posed the question a little differently? What if we asked, "Are you honest with yourself"? Almost all of us would answer, "Of course"! Even if I tried lying to myself, wouldn't I know I was lying? I might try to convince myself of this or that but at the end of the day, I know the truth.

When examining this week's portion it forces us to think about this question and to consider that perhaps we really do lie to ourselves and on a conscious level, we are not even aware that we are lying.

This week we read about the Meraglim, the scouts or as they are better known, the spies. As Rabbi Frand explains it, Moshe charges the Spies to gather intelligence about the nations of Canaan? When the Spies come back and report that the people are "stronger than we are" the Zohar (which is quoted by many of the commentaries as well) claims that the Spies had an agenda. They were afraid that when they go into the Land of Israel they would lose their positions of leadership and honor in the nation. Therefore, they subconsciously sabotaged the plans to take the nation into Eretz Yisrael so that they would not lose their grip on power.

In a similar vein, we read about, that the people longed for the onions and the garlic they ate in Egypt and we assume that as typical Jews, they were complaining about food. Rashi though cites the teaching of the Rabbis that the crying was "concerning the families" – namely they complained about the forbidden sexual relationships that the Torah legislated for the Jewish nation. According to this Rabbinic tradition, the main complaint was not about onions but of Arayot – those forbidden relationships.

Rabbi Frand brings Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky who asks a simple question in both cases, How can we put words into their mouths? Why do the Rabbis interpret this to be something totally different than the simple reading of Scripture? .

Rav Yaakov answers: Chazal do this because they descend to the depths of man's psyche. They are telling us something very profound about human nature. Everyone has subconscious feelings and forces and desires that perhaps even the person himself is not completely aware of. Something goes on inside a person that is more than meets the eye. Chazal, either through ruach haKodesh or through their sensitive intuition of how human beings function, know that something deeper is going on. When people gather on their front doorsteps and cry out loud so that everyone will hear, they are not just crying about onions! People do not cry about onions. They are crying about something else.

This week too, great men go to tour the land. They go in with the highest of intentions and something happens inside of them that affects their perspective. They see funerals and instead of appreciating this as a gift to hide them, they see the land as a land that devours its people. They see it as a land where they cannot survive. They go so far as to declare it a land where G-d himself will be defeated.

Although the Zohar tells us of their ulterior motive, we cannot even imagine that they were conscious of this motive. They became victims of self delusion. Just like last week, they may have thought they were crying over onions, but deep down it was much more.

Last Friday, David Brooks wrote an article based on Dan Ariely's new book "The (Honest) Truth About Dishonesty."

He begins with a story: In the 1970s, the gift shop at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts was an informal

affair. It was staffed by about 300 mostly elderly volunteers, and there were cash drawers instead of registers. The problem was that of the shop's \$400,000 in annual revenue, somebody was stealing \$150,000. Dan Weiss, the gift shop manager at the time who is now the president of Lafayette College, investigated. He discovered that there wasn't one big embezzler. Bunches of people were stealing. Dozens of elderly art lovers were each pilfering a little.

More interesting was a story about our moral compass. Ariely states that, "Nearly everybody cheats, but usually only a little". He and his colleagues gave thousands of people 20 number problems. When they tackled the problems and handed in the answer sheet, people got an average of four correct responses. When they tackled the problems, shredded their answer sheets and self-reported the scores, they told the researchers they got six correct responses. They cheated a little, but not a lot.

And I would venture to wonder if they even thought they were cheating.

He states that the bottom line is that people want to feel good about themselves. He invented other tests to illustrate this phenomenon. He put cans of Coke and plates with dollar bills in the kitchens of college dorms. People walked away with the Cokes, but not the dollar bills, which would have felt more like stealing.

And I found the next one even more fascinating. He had one blind colleague and one sighted colleague take taxi rides. The drivers cheated the sighted colleague by taking long routes much more often than they cheated the blind one, even

though she would have been easier to mislead. They would have felt guilty cheating a blind woman.

Again I wonder, did they go so far to really believe they weren't cheating the sighted people. What clicks inside of us that pushes that moral compass?

In business I find that people we deal with typically say what they mean, but in the Rabbi business I often find the opposite. Rabbi Frand notes, "When people go to psychologists or psychiatrists and tell them their problems, if the professional is keen and he understands human nature, he recognizes that what the person is saying is NOT what he really means. These are the words he is saying, but there is something else that is really going on in his mind. A wise individual or a highly trained professional will be able to detect what is really happening deep within a person's mind.

So many times, Chazal put words in people's mouths and they do this because they are trying to teach us to know and understand human nature. They are trying to tell us that this happens to each and every one of us. We each have hidden agendas and subconscious motives. We do not really know or understand ourselves fully because we are so subjective about decisions that affect us. Yet we want to believe we are good people.

Ariely suggests we stop and reset our moral gauge from time to time. Our moral standards will gradually slip as we become more and more comfortable with our own rationalizations. We need to step back. Break our patterns and begin anew. He says that this is what Yom Kippur is for.

I don't know how observant Dan Ariely is, (I'll get all you MIT

people in Boston telling me minutes after I post this) but he is clearly supportive of people having religious beliefs. He goes so far in his secular book to tell people, that the "next time you feel tempted by something, recite the Ten Commandments. A small triggering nudge at the moment of temptation, is more effective than an epic sermon meant to permanently transform your whole soul."

The Talmud in Berachot provides various methods to overcome one's evil inclination. If one senses a temptation to sin one should first focus on words of Torah. If this doesn't help, one should recite the Shema. (If even this fails to assist, as a last resort one should focus on death. We leave death for last as this is depressing.) These are all small triggers that can get shock us slightly and get us back on the path.

But more important is taking the time, once a week on Shabbat, or every night before we go to sleep, to examine our deeds of the day. Look at what we did and press ourselves to understand why. Rabbi Abittan would say by doing this daily, we don't allow ourselves to get too far off course. We need to take the time to reset that moral compass back to neutral.

Know Thyself. When do we lie to ourselves. And why do we lie to ourselves. And how do we cover it up afterwards. When we say something, what do we really mean. When we complain or fight about something, what is it that we are really complaining about.

It's up to each of us and only us to answer our own questions! The Rabbi would say that the world becomes a better place only when we fix ourselves first.
Shabbat Shalom, David Bibi

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

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 Haftarah 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

"Do not stray after your heart and after your eyes." (Bemidbar 15:39)

It is interesting to note that although we see an object before desiring it in our heart, the Torah mentions desire first. This is because we usually see what we want to see. Our eyes are guided by what is already in our hearts. Rabbi Ephraim Nisenbaum explains with a parable. Three men quickly scanned the front page of a newspaper in passing. The news junkie is immediately drawn to the headlines, the sports fan sees the latest scores at the top of the page, and the investor's eyes move to the stock market rates.

Rav Moshe Feinstein walked to his Yeshivah each day from his apartment on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Someone asked him how he maintained his spiritual composure when he passed so many immodest billboards and storefronts on the way. Rav Moshe looked at the man innocently and responded, "Really? Are there immodest sights along the way? I never even noticed!" Shabbat Shalom.
Rabbi Reuven Semah

When Moshe sent the twelve spies into the land, he changed his student's name from Hoshea to Yehoshua by adding a letter Yud to his name. The Rabbis tell us he took the letter Yud from the name of Sarah, our Matriarch, whose name was originally Sarai, and so the Yud from her name went to Yehoshua. What is the symbolism behind this message?

Sarah was the one who told Abraham to drive Yishmael out from the house because she saw him as a negative influence

on her son, Yitzhak. Hashem agreed with Sarah and commanded Abraham to listen to Sarah. Here too, the lesson is that if Yehoshua wants to be the one to conquer and distribute the land to the Jewish people, he must remove all negative influences from their environment. To establish a proper community, we must be on guard that only positive and proper lessons be instilled within us and our children. That is the legacy of Sarah Imenu and that is what Yehoshua was to follow in setting up the land of Israel! Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR **The Unsung Heroes**

The Midrash comments, "There is nothing more beloved before the Almighty than Sheluhev Misva, and there were no Sheluhev Misva like those two men sent by Yehoshua Bin Nun."

The Sages here extol the virtues of "Sheluhev Misva" – people who are sent on a mission involving a Misva – and in searching for models of "Sheluhev Misva," they point specifically to the two spies sent by Yehoshua before Beneh Yisrael entered the land, about whom we read in the Haftara for Parashat Shelah. What specific quality of Sheluhev Misva is so admirable and worthy of praise, and why are Yehoshua's two spies – whom Hazal identify as Kaleb and Pinhas – seen as the quintessential "Sheluhev Misva"?

The Shaareh Ora (by Rav Meir Bergman, contemporary) explains that "Sheluhev Misva" are generally the people who do the hard work without receiving credit or notoriety. For example, when we honor a person who "built" an institution, we generally refer to the primary donor, or the person who spearheaded or raised funds

for the project. The laborers on the ground who laid the cement and placed the bricks are not the ones who receive the credit, even though they exerted far greater effort and toil to bring the project to fruition. The ultimate "Sheluhev Misva" are the people who devote themselves arduously to a Misva without seeking recognition or fame, who work purely "Le'Shem Shamayim," sincerely for the sake of God, without anticipating fame or notoriety.

The models of this kind of "Sheluhev Misva" are Kaleb and Pinhas, two accomplished, distinguished men who were sent by Yehoshua, who was considerably younger than them, on a risky, clandestine mission that involved no honor or prestige. In fact, the text in Sefer Yehoshua does not even mention their names; we have to open up the Gemara to find out who they were. Kaleb and Pinhas thus exemplify the "Shaliah Misva," the unsung hero, the one who embarks on a difficult Misva with complete sincerity, without seeking fame and recognition.

Any American who lived during the Persian Gulf War of 1991 and would be asked to name the general who ran the war would, in an instant, mention the name of Norman Schwarzkopf, the U.S. Army commander at the time. However, an article published many years later noted that Schwarzkopf was not the only hero of the Gulf War. Schwarzkopf devised the military strategy of the war, which was certainly no easy feat and is deserving of praise, but this was not the most difficult challenge of the campaign. There was somebody else, whose name is not even known, who worked as the army's logistician during the war. He was the one who had to figure out how to get the many thousands of troops to where they

needed to go, how to make sure they all had proper food and other provisions, and that the day-to-day needs of all personnel were met. This was an enormous undertaking, and one which did not come with any fame or distinction. Schwarzkopf received wide acclaim for his effective work, but the nameless logistician did not – even though his work was certainly no less important or difficult.

There are numerous groups of "unsung heroes" among Am Yisrael, those who toil laboriously and quietly to continue our Torah tradition but without receiving much honor or fame. The most notable of these groups, perhaps, is the women. The role of Orthodox Jewish women, by and large, revolves mainly around the home, as they are the ones who tend to the household and raise the children, imbuing within them a love for Torah and our traditions. Most women do not receive any public accolades for their work, despite the fact that they devote themselves tirelessly to the needs of the home and their job is at least as vital – and likely far more vital – than that of their husbands. The Jewish women are the unsung heroes, the Pinhas and Kaleb of Am Yisrael, the ones who undertake great challenges for the sake of the nation without seeking recognition, working purely "Le'Shem Shamayim," for the sake of God, Torah and the Jewish people.

Rabbi Wein

The attitude of Jews towards the Land of Israel has always been a litmus type of test of Jewish commitment and even faith throughout the ages. As we see in this week's parsha, from the beginning of our national existence there have always been Jews – leading Jews, well-

intentioned Jews, even outwardly pious Jews – who have preferred living somewhere else in the world to living in the Land of Israel.

Even when Hitler came to power, European Jews in many cases refused to consider the option of immigration to the Land of Israel. It is not my place to judge others for their behavior in a very dreadful time, especially since I am blessed with the perfect hindsight that they tragically lacked, but it is a strange fact that throughout Jewish history the naysayers regarding the Land of Israel in Jewish society have always abounded.

Jews in the generation of Moses claimed their preference for the land of Egypt over the Land of Israel. An entire generation of special and gifted Jews was destroyed in the desert of Sinai because of their unwillingness to consider living in the Land of Israel as a viable option for them and their descendants. The challenge of living in the Land of Israel was apparently too great a problem for them to overcome - physically, psychologically and spiritually.

To me this attitude remains one of the supreme mysteries of all of Jewish history. But mystery or not, it certainly is a fact that has governed Jewish life over the ages.

When Moses' own relative refused the offer to go to the Land of Israel, Rashi explains that the two reasons for his behavior had to do with family and making a living. These are very strong reasons that exist today that prevent many Jews from considering immigrating to the Land of Israel. Again, I neither judge nor begrudge anyone in this or any other life changing matter.

However, I feel that the issue of the Land of Israel, independent of any other causes and motives, strikes at a very deep place within our personal and national soul. The fact that the most ultra-assimilated and the most outwardly ultra-pious within the Jewish people are included in our generation's most vociferous of the anti- Land of Israel groups, shows that the problem is both deep and sensitive.

The extremes in Jewish society cannot deal with the Land of Israel as a reality and earnestly hope that the issue will somehow disappear completely. There are millions of Jews who prefer living in exile to living in the Land of Israel. The Jewish people, as a whole has not absorbed the lessons of the exile, its alienation, assimilation and its ultimate corruption of Torah values.

Today, many Jews who physically live in the Land of Israel still psychologically and spiritually live in the exile, in a fantasy of the long-destroyed shtetel of Eastern Europe. As foretold to us by our prophets, the ultimate fate of the Jewish people will be determined for us by our attitude to the Land of Israel. Living in the Land of Israel or at least visiting it regularly is currently the centerpiece of Jewish life, its faith and its future.

**Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United
Hebrew Congregations
of the Commonwealth**

The Fear of Freedom

The episode of the spies has rightly puzzled commentators throughout the centuries. How could they have got it so wrong? The land, they said, was as Moses had promised. It was indeed "flowing with milk and

honey." But conquering it was impossible. "The people who live there are powerful, and the cities fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of the giant there ... We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are ... All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the titans there ... We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so we seemed in theirs" (Num. 13: 28-33).

They were terrified of the inhabitants of the land, and entirely failed to realise that the inhabitants were terrified of them. Rahab, the prostitute in Jericho, tells the spies sent by Joshua a generation later: "I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you ... our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below" (Joshua 2: 10-11).

The truth was the exact opposite of the spies' report. The inhabitants feared the Israelites more than the Israelites feared the inhabitants. We hear this at the start of the story of Bilaam: "Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites." Earlier the Israelites themselves had sung at the Red Sea: "The people of Canaan will melt away; terror and dread will fall on them" (Ex. 15: 15-16).

How then did the spies err so egregiously? Did they misinterpret what they saw? Did they lack faith in God? Did they – more likely – lack faith in themselves? Or was it simply, as Maimonides argues in *The Guide for the Perplexed*, that

their fear was inevitable given their past history? They had spent most of their lives as slaves. Only recently had they acquired their freedom. They were not yet ready to fight a prolonged series of battles and establish themselves as a free people in their own land. That would take a new generation, born in freedom. Humans change, but not that quickly (Guide III, 32).

Most of the commentators assume that the spies were guilty of a failure of nerve, or faith, or both. It is hard to read the text otherwise. However, in the Hassidic literature – from the Baal Shem Tov to R. Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger (Sefat Emet) to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Menachem Mendel Schneersohn – an entirely different line of interpretation emerged, reading the text against the grain to dramatic effect so that it remains relevant and powerful today. According to their interpretation, the spies were well-intentioned. They were, after all, “princes, chieftains, leaders” (Num. 13: 2-3). They did not doubt that Israel could win its battles with the inhabitants of the land. They did not fear failure; they feared success. Their concern was not physical but spiritual. They did not want to leave the wilderness. They did not want to become just another nation among the nations of the earth. They did not want to lose their unique relationship with God in the reverberating silence of the desert, far removed from civilization and its discontents.

Here they were close to God, closer than any generation before or since. He was a palpable presence in the Sanctuary in their midst, and in the clouds of glory that surrounded them. Here His people ate manna from heaven and water from the rock and experienced miracles daily. So long as they stayed in the desert

under God’s sheltering canopy, they did not need to plough the earth, plant seeds, gather harvests, defend a country, run an economy, maintain a welfare system, or shoulder any of the other earthly burdens and distractions that take peoples’ minds away from the Divine.

Here, in no-man’s-land, in liminal space, suspended between past and future, they were able to live with a simplicity and directness of encounter they could not hope to find once they had re-entered the gravitational pull of everyday life in the material world.

Paradoxically, since a desert is normally the exact opposite of a garden, the wilderness was the Israelites’ Eden. Here they were as close to God as were the first humans before their loss of innocence.

If that comparison is too discordant, recall that Hosea and Jeremiah both compared the wilderness to a honeymoon. Hosea said in the name of God: “I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her” (Hos. 2: 16), implying that in the future God would take the people back there to celebrate a second honeymoon. Jeremiah said in God’s name, “I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown” (Jer. 2: 2). For both prophets, the wilderness years were the time of the first love between God and the Israelites. That is what the spies did not want to leave.

Clearly this interpretation is not the plain sense of the narrative, but we should not dismiss it on that account. It is, as it were, a psychoanalytical reading, an account of the unconscious mindset of the spies. They did not want to let go of the intimacy and

innocence of childhood and enter the adult world. Sometimes it is hard for parents to let go of their children; at others it is the other way round. But there must be a measure of separation if children are to become responsible adults. Ultimately the spies feared freedom and its responsibilities.

But that is what Torah is about. Judaism is not a religion of monastic retreat from the world. It is supremely a religion of engagement with the world. The Torah is a template for the construction of a society with all its gritty details: laws of warfare and welfare, harvests and livestock, loans and employer-employee relationships, the code of a nation in its land, part of the real world of politics and economics, yet somehow pointing to a better world where justice and compassion, love of the neighbour and stranger, are not remote ideals but part of the texture of everyday life. God chose Israel to make His presence visible in the world, and that means that Israel must live in the world.

To be sure, the Jewish people were not without their desert-dwellers and ascetics. The Qumran sect known to us from the Dead Sea Scrolls was such a group. The Talmud speaks of R. Shimon bar Yochai in similar terms. Having lived for thirteen years in a cave, he could not bear to see people engaged in such earthly pursuits as ploughing a field. Maimonides speaks of people who live as hermits in the desert to escape the corruptions of society (Laws of ethical character, 6: 1; Eight Chapters, ch. 4). But these were the exceptions, not the rule. This is not the destiny of Israel, to live outside time and space in ashrams or monasteries as the world’s recluses. Far from being the supreme height of faith, such

a fear of freedom and its responsibilities is – according to both the Gerer and Lubavitcher Rebbe – the sin of the spies.

There is a voice within the tradition, most famously identified with R. Shimon bar Yochai, that regards engagement with the world as fundamentally incompatible with the heights of spirituality. But the mainstream held otherwise. "Torah study without an occupation will in the end fail and lead to sin" (Avot 2: 2). "One who makes his mind up to study Torah and not to work but to live on charity, profanes the name of God, brings the Torah into contempt, extinguishes the light of religion, brings evil upon himself, and deprives himself of life hereafter" (Maimonides, Laws of Torah Study 3:10).

The spies did not want to contaminate Judaism by bringing it into contact with the real world. They sought the eternal childhood of God's protection and the endless honeymoon of His all-embracing love. There is something noble about this desire, but also something profoundly irresponsible that demoralised the people and provoked God's anger. For the Jewish project – the Torah as the constitution of the Jewish nation under the sovereignty of God – is about building a society in the land of Israel that so honours human dignity and freedom that it will one day lead the world to say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut. 4: 6).

The Jewish task is not to fear the real world but to enter and transform it. That is what the spies did not understand. Do we – Jews of faith – understand it even now?

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"And you will see it and you will remember all the Mitzvot of Hashem and you will do them" (15:39)

The Mitzvah of Sisit is a Commandment which is categorized as an 'Edut', Testimony. An Edut testifies to Historical events or great principles. Since we can understand the Edut more easily, therefore they are more obligatory for us to do them. Principle: "Whatever is easier to do is more obligatory".

Some examples of Edut are:
Matzah – to recall being slaves in Egypt.
Sisit – to remember the Mitzvot.
Mezuzah – reminds us that this is a Holy home given to us by Hashem.
Teffilin – reminds us that Hashem took us out of Egypt. And that the words of Torah should be on our lips.
Pesach – Yetziat Mitzrayim.
Shabbat – that Hashem created the world from nothing (ex nihilo).

The verse says that when we look at the Sisit we should remember all of the (613) Mitzvot. This would necessitate the knowledge of all the Mitzvot and include a special effort to perform. The Rabbis tell us, "If a person tries to do too much at one time he will not accomplish anything". Therefore, when we gather the 4 Sisit every morning during the Shema prayer, lets try to think and 'remember' at least the following 4 Mitzvot which will fulfill 4 Commandments from our Torah.

1. "To gain fear/awareness of Hashem" – think that Hashem is looking at you. "Et Hashem Elokecha tira"

2. "To Love Hashem" – say, 'I Love You Hashem'. "Veahabta Et Hashem Elokecha Bechal Lebabecha"

3. "To Thank Hashem" – Thank Him for Everything. "Tob Lehodot LeHashem"

4. "To Love your fellow Jew & Jewish Nation" – Hashem created the world for Am Yisrael. "Beni Bechori Yisrael".

We must listen to the testimony of the Edut as they were made in order to speak to us. When you see 'Sisit', your neighbor's or your own, remind yourself of the Mitzvot.

By thinking into the Edut/Testimonies of our Torah you will produce a diamond and a collection of gems in your mind which will give you pleasure in this world and in the next world forever.

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