

**Remember Who Sent You!**

The story of Moses and the *Twelve Spies* (-Numbers Chapters 13 & 14) begins with, "And G-d said to Moses, 'Send out for yourself men who will scout the Land of Canaan...' Rashi wants to know why the extra word, "lecha- for yourself"? "Send for yourself": According to your own understanding. I am not commanding you, but if you wish, you may send."

The obvious question here is, being that (-ibid 12:7), "My servant Moses; he is faithful throughout My house," hence, we must say that Moses' sending the spies was because so was the mind of his Master, G-d, as the verse itself testifies (-ibid 13:3), "Moses sent them... by the word of G-d," as Nachmanides (-Link) explains here that it is the natural way to conquer a country by first sending spies and learning which is the easiest way to conquer it, and being that (-Jerusalem Talmud, Yevomos 1:4), "we do not rely on miracles," therefore, we were obligated to send spies, which is why Moses agreed to do so. Why then does G-d make it be, "according to your understanding," instead of giving a direct command to Moses to do so? Additionally, Rashi tells us concerning the spies that, "At that time, they were virtuous," as it is understood that Moses would (a) choose virtuous men, and (b) men befitting for this mission. How then could it be that they flip to the other extreme, not only failing at their mission, but to the point of creating (-Taanit 29a), "((-Numbers 14:1), 'And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried and the people wept that night.' Rabba said that Rabbi Yochanan said: That night was the night of the Ninth of Av (-Link). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: You wept needlessly that night, and I will therefore establish for you) a (true tragedy over which there will be) weeping for generations"?!)

**Introduction to Explanation:** Moses gave the spies two missions: (i) Gather the important facts about the people and the cities: "See what [kind of] land it is, and the people who inhabit it; are they strong or weak? Are there few or many? And what of the land they inhabit? Is it good or bad? And what of the cities in which they reside are they in camps or in fortresses?" (ii) Gather the important facts about the produce of the land: "What is the soil like is it fat or lean? Are there any trees in it or not?" to the point of, "You shall be courageous --being that it will be dangerous to do so, being that it then becomes obvious that they are spies!-- and take from the fruit of the land."

The question on this is, even though the rule is (-Mechilta 19:9), "There is no comparison between one's hearing and one's seeing," and therefore, even though they already heard that G-d said that He is bringing them (-Exodus 3:8), "to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey," and in addition to this, Israel are (-Shabbat 97a), "Believers the sons of believers," and on top of this, no faith was needed when definitely those who lived in Egypt had knowledge of what was going on in their neighboring *Land of Israel* (Canaan at the time), nevertheless, there is no comparison between all of this, and of seeing the fruits of the land, which was meant (-Nachmanides, ibid), "To go up there (Land of Israel) with joy". However, is this (seeing the fruits) so *necessary*, to the point of *endangering the lives of the spies*?!)

The answer to this is to understand what was the purpose behind the mission of the spies, beyond Nachmanides' point of, "we do not rely on miracles"? The foundation of observing all of Torah and Mitzvot is, "We will do (obedience) and we will hear (understand; appreciate)". In other words, even though we have to place our "Do" before our "Hear", nevertheless, we need to also hear. Therefore, beyond the *obedience* ("Do") to G-d's telling them that it is a good land, G-d wants Israel, within our minds, to appreciate ("Hear") the goodness of the land. Unto this end did Moses command the spies to bring back fruits of the land, so that Israel can appreciate the truth of, "to a good and spacious land."

So too, it is concerning the, "Gather the important facts about the people and the cities". It was in order that Israel, in our intellectual capacity, appreciate that (-Numbers 13:30), "We can surely go up and take possession of it, for we can indeed overcome it." And this is the reason why G-d did not *command* Israel to send spies, but instead let it be, "According to your own understanding," so that it not be of the, "We will Do," *obedience* of, "For I have commanded you," but of a, "We will Hear," *appreciation*, "According to your own understanding."

With this we now understand how the "virtuous" spies could flip to the other extreme, to the point of saying (-ibid, verse 31), "We are unable to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we". Being that the entire mission was focused on, "According to your own understanding," hence, the *virtuous* spies, in being loyal to their mission, make the mistake of passing judgement, "according to their understanding," seeing that in truth (-ibid, verses 28, 32-33), "The people who inhabit the land are mighty, and the cities are extremely huge and fortified... a land that consumes its inhabitants... we saw the giants," hence concluding that, "We are unable to go up against the people." Their mistake however was, Moses never sent them with the mission of seeing "if" they can conquer the land, but only, "how" to conquer the land, in an appreciation of accordance with the *Laws of Nature*, without the *obedience* of relying on miracles. Hence, their entire endeavor of determining, "We are unable to go up," was contrary to their entire being "Emissaries of Moses".

**The Lesson:** The surest way of not falling prey to the same mistake that the spies made, is to know that the name of this Torah-portion is, "*Shelach -Send!*" Meaning, even when the mission is one of, "We will hear (understand; appreciate)," and of, "your own understanding," we must *first and foremost* remember that we are "Emissaries of Moses!" In other words, in being an *Emissary of Moses*, we must put aside any of our prejudice, self-interest, and egoism, but rather, have self-nullification, and thus, a transparency to, "My servant Moses; he is faithful throughout My house," and who, "Moses is truth!" Only then, will we be open to the objective truth of G-d, and of G-d's universe. Lastly, it is through this self-negation and transparency that we reach conquering the land according to its true borders, and to the fulfillment of the prophecy (-Deuteronomy 12:20, 19:8), "When the L-rd, your G-d, expands your boundary."