



Parshas Shelach 2022, a little seedling

Our Parsha begins with the story of the spies' reconnaissance of Israel. The Jewish people lacked faith in what G-d had told them about the land, so they asked Moshe if they could send spies to study Israel and report back.

Moshe asks G-D, who replies that he is allowed to send spies, but **He** is not commanding him to do so. Moshe then picked one leader from each tribe and assigned them this special task.

The spies headed out to perform their directives; they spent 40 days surveying the land and its people. When they returned to Moshe, they reported that the land was flowing with milk and honey. However, they warned that its citizens are powerful and mighty giants, and its cities are well fortified. Therefore, it will be impossible to conquer.

The Jewish nation turned to Moshe and told him that they rather **return to Egypt** than be defeated in battle. Upon hearing their complaints, G-d informed Moshe that He would punish the Jewish people for their persistent lack of faith. He exiled the Jewish nation to forty years of wandering throughout the desert and banned any male over the age of 20 from entering the land of Israel.

However, a question comes to mind: The chapter following the episode of the spies begins with the sacrifices that will be offered once they settle in Israel. (15:1-3) (1) *"G-d spoke to Moshe saying. (2) Speak to the Jewish people and say to them: when you enter the land that I am giving you. (3) you shall give an offering to G-d."*

But why did G-d detail what must be done after entering the land directly after banning that generation from entering Israel? What is G-d implying by mentioning these sacrifices?!

The Ibn Ezra (*Rav Avraham Ben Meir Ibn Ezra, a commentary that focuses on the text's simple meaning*) gives a straightforward answer. He writes that G-d gave these laws to show the Jewish people that He forgave them.

They publicly mourned when Moshe, Aaron, and the two righteous spies, Yeshua and Calev, saw that the nation did not want to go to Israel. They attempted to reason with the nation (14:7) "*The land we scouted and explored is very, very good.*" But the people lost all interest; instead, (14:10) "*They threatened to throw and pelt them with stones.*"

The Ibn Ezra explains that since most people turned their back on Israel, G-d wanted them to know He had exonerated them. Although He banished them to the desert for 40 years, His relationship with His people **remains very much alive**. They are still obligated to learn Torah and fulfill its commandments. Despite their punishment, they are beholden to the covenant G-d made with them at Mt. Sinai; they are His chosen people from all other nations.

However, The Rabbienu Bachya (*Rav Bachya Ben Asher, a commentary incorporating literal explanations, philosophy, and mysticism*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He quotes the Midrash Tanchuma (*Shelach* 1:4) that these laws are connected to the spies' failure to instill confidence in the youth and the next generation.

The Rabbienu Bachya explains that children were already mourning their parents' premature death once they heard the punishment. As you can imagine, their view and perspective of the land were not great as it was connected to much pain. Consequently, G-d gave these laws to the people who won't enter the land, so they could teach their children how to take advantage of Israel's incredible blessings.

How to thank G-d for fulfilling His promise to our Forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov? Although it would be a while, their descendants would go and settle in the Holy land.

It is common knowledge that parents will always want their children to surpass and be more successful than they were. But for that to happen, parents need to plant seeds of faith, wisdom, and compassion into the heart and souls of their children. This parental obligation only grows as they mature and develop, but they begin to see the fruit of their labor. How the values they taught were understood and incorporated into their children's daily life.

The Rabbienu Bachya explains that although they won't be entering, G-d wanted them to ensure their children would see the beauty and take advantage of Israel's holiness. This begins by teaching their children what they should offer G-d once they settle in Israel, our eternal home.

In our daily life, we must realize that the education of our youth is of the utmost importance. The values of our society are constantly changing, moving social and ethical norms to a point almost beyond recognition. Unfortunately, this is not only true from a religious perspective but also from a secular and civil viewpoint.

This means we must go on the offense concerning the education of our youth and the people they surround themselves with. The more energy parents put into their children's development, the more they will savor and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

"There is divine beauty in learning. To learn means to accept that life did not begin at my birth. Others have been here before me, and I walk in their footsteps. The books I have read were composed by generations of fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, teachers and disciples. I am the sum total of their experiences, and so are you." —Elie Wiesel

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*