

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 28 Sivan 5786. placed them on a much higher level than the rest of the world.
Corresponding to June 13, 2026

TORAH DIALOGUE
(p. 623 Hz) (p. 860 S) (p. 560 Hi) (p. 798 AS)
SHELACH
Numbers 13:1
[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis (RED),
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1. In Parshat Devarim, Moshe wrote that it was the people's idea to send a Spy Mission into the Promised Land. Here, in today's Parshah, it seems that it was Hashem's idea. Rashi points out that Hashem was not commanding Moshe to send the mission, but He agrees to it. He leaves the decision up to Moshe. By agreeing, Moshe was hoping that the people would abandon the request. If Moshe would say NO, the people would be wondering, "What is he trying to hide?" By agreeing he would hope that the people would conclude that Moshe had nothing to hide. It is up to the people. But it is risky. They, the people, could lose the right to settle in the Land. And that is what happened. Or maybe the tribal leaders who would be the spies were not interested in entering the Land. In the desert, they were prominent leaders. Once they entered the Land, Bnei Yisrael would be dispersed throughout the country and these men would lose their united sphere of influence. (RED)

2. The list of the spies is given in the order of their personal greatness (Ramban). This is intriguing because Calev is mentioned third, and Yehoshua is mentioned fifth. That means that there were two spies who were greater than our two heroes. What is also interesting is that there was no ringleader. In the next story in the Torah, Korach was the evil leader of the rebellion. He was the ringleader; Datan and Aviram were next in line. In the Spy story, there is no individual villain. They were a unified group, albeit doomed to failure. But it leads us to conclude that the unified front means that the feeling of the insecure future of Klal Yisrael was felt uniformly among the people. The period of Hashem fighting for them, performing miracles as He did in Egypt, was a thing of the past. Now the people had to form an army (as they did in the beginning of BaMidbar) and were destined to fight for themselves. Maybe the people were truly not ready for the next step.

3. Moshe calls Hoshea, Yehoshua. The Midrash says that when Sarai became Sarah, the *yud* from her name was given to Yehoshua. The *hey* that is added to Sarah indicates that Sarah belonged to a larger group. *Hey* represented universalism. The *yud* indicates individuality and not belonging to a larger group. Yehoshua did not want to be part of the group of spies. Hence Moshe's Berachah was a correct one. Avraham had a *hey* added to his name as well, to indicate that he was the father of a larger group, for many nations (Rav Soloveitchik). A different idea was once presented by Rav Moshe Shapiro, zt"l, in Eretz Yisrael when he developed the idea that the letter *hey* meant the World to Come. Adding the letter *hey* to both Avraham and Sarah

4. In the aftermath of the Spy Mission, Hashem rewards Calev with his family heritage including Chevron and the patriarchal burial plots. And it was to be given to Calev's descendants. "And his offspring shall possess it" (14:24). No reward is mentioned for Yehoshua. The Ramban states that the omission is not so noteworthy, since Yehoshua's ultimate reward was being Moshe's successor. Yehoshua will lead Bnei Yisrael in invading and conquering Canaan. The Torah Temimah takes a contrary approach (in his Tosefet Berachah). He wrote that the Torah omits Yehoshua's blessing because Yehoshua did not have any children. With no offspring to possess any part of Eretz Yisrael, there is no reason to mention him and cause him more sadness. But simply put, the Torah rewards Calev since he attempted to silence his colleagues. Seemingly Yehoshua did not. But the Talmud (Sotah 35a) records that Yehoshua did attempt to silence the spies. The spies refused to listen to him since Yehoshua had no children and therefore had no vested interest in the conquest of Canaan. Actually the spies had good reason not to listen to either one of them. Yehoshua was Moshe's disciple; Calev was Moshe's brother-in-law. (RED)

5. The Mitzvah of Challah is discussed here in the text. The Mitzvah is called Challah, which is the same name we use to describe the loaf of bread that we eat on Shabbat. When making bread, we mix the ingredients together and form the dough. At this point, the first task is to take a portion of the dough and give it to a Kohen. Since there are no absolute Kohanim today, we burn the separated dough. I believe that we call the bread Challah as a reminder to observe this Mitzvah. This is a tribute to the Jewish people, who observe this Mitzvah at all times that we bake bread. In many homes, the only time we bake bread is to make Challah for Shabbat. In neighborhoods where kosher Challah is readily available and sold in the grocery stores, it is nice to see how many women take the time to make homemade Challah. May it be a Segulah. (When we bake a cake, Challah is not taken because the batter is so loose. When we make cookies, Challah should be taken.) (RED)

6. Right before the Torah gives us the Mitzvah of Tzitzit, it describes a Jewish person who willfully desecrated the Shabbat and gathered wood. In judgement, he is stoned to death for his sin. Rashi says (from the Sifre) that only one person desecrated the Shabbat out of the whole nation. According to the Vilna Gaon, there was a general laxity in the desert in obeying the Shabbat laws. Today it is estimated that less than 10% of the world Jewish population observes Shabbat. In Israel we see ultra-Orthodox Jews, in some neighborhoods, getting visibly upset in seeing Shabbat desecrated. They yell and/or throw rocks at Shabbat desecrators. Here in America, we grow up seeing Jews desecrate Shabbat all the time, and we are not upset about it. [RED's Note: Once we spent a Shabbat in Boca Raton to attend a family Simchah. A lady approached me and told me that she made the decision to become observant when she was driving her car on Shabbat morning on Stirling Road and

was forced to stop, by the police, to allow our congregants to walk across the street, wheeling their strollers. She thought to herself that she wanted to be one of them, walking to Shul on Shabbat, and not one of the drivers on Shabbat. I guess that was a benefit of not throwing rocks at her!]

7. The verb "to see" is recorded in a similar verb form three times in the Torah. The first time is in Shemot (1:16), when Pharaoh is addressing the midwives and says to them, "When you deliver the Hebrew women, and you see (them) on the birthstone, if it is a son..." The second and third times are in this week's Sidrah (13:18), "See the Land, How is it?..." and (15:39) "...you shall see it (the Tzitzit)..." The verb "to see" means much more than physically seeing; it means comprehending and absorbing what you see. The first time "to see" is used it refers to understanding where we come from. The second "to see" applies to the Land, to see where you are going. And the third time "to see" is used, it applies to Tzitzit. Understand who you are at all times; in front of whom you are bound to stand in judgement. Your past, your present, and your future are extremely important, a sense of awareness that we are required to have at all times in life. (Tosefet Berachah)

QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT SHELACH 5786

I. From the Text

1. How many spies did Moshe send? (13:2-14)
2. Why did the spies feel that Bnei Yisrael could not conquer the Promised Land? (13:31)
3. How did Bnei Yisrael respond to Yehoshua and Calev's statement that they can conquer the Promised Land filled with milk and honey? (14:10)
4. How did the evil spies die? (14:37)
5. What two countries killed the people who charged ahead to conquer Canaan? (14:45)

II. From Rashi

6. Why did the Torah tell the story of the Spies immediately after Miriam spoke Lashon HaRa about her brother? (13:2)
7. What reward did Calev receive for not speaking Lashon HaRa about Eretz Yisrael? (13:22)
8. On what calendar date was the report of the Spies? (Rashi on Psalms 106:27)
9. What measurement is Rabbinically given for the Challah to be given to the Kohen from the bread dough? (15:20)
10. What is the source of the color blue/turquoise Techeilet? (15:33)

III. From the Rabbis

11. Why was Yosef's name mentioned only with Menasheh and not with Ephraim?
12. Who is the leader who will replace Moshe, according to the Spies? (Sanhedrin 107a)
13. Why did Hashem give the law of the meal offering and libation right after the punishment from the Spy Mission? (Ramban)

IV. Midrash

14. What land did Hashem give the Canaanites when they were forced out of the Jewish Promised Land?

V. Haftorah. Yehoshua

15. What were the names of the two spies whom Yehoshua sent into Jericho?

VI. Relationships

- 16.
- a) Shem - Eiver
- b) Dinah - Sered
- c) Mitzrayim - Canaan
- d) Eldad - Meidad
- e) Michal - Yonatan

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT SHELACH 5786

1. Twelve. One from each tribe, but not Levi.
2. Because the Canaanites were stronger than Bnei Yisrael.
3. The people wanted to stone them.
4. In a plague.
5. Canaanites and Amalekites.
6. Miriam spoke Lashon HaRa and was punished. These people saw that and did not learn from Miriam's sin.
7. The city of Chevron
8. Tisha B'Av
9. For the private home: 1/24 of the dough. For the professional baker: 1/48 of the dough.
10. The aquatic snail type animal
11. Because Yosef spoke Lashon HaRa and therefore is mentioned with Menasheh. Ephraim's representative was Yehoshua who did not speak Lashon HaRa.
12. An idol
13. To assure the younger generation that they WILL enter the Promised Land.
14. Africa
15. Calev and Pinchas
- 16.
- a) Great Grandfather Shem
- b) Aunt Dinah (Sered was Zevulun's son)
- c) Brothers (sons of Cham)
- d) Brothers (according to Targum Yonatan, and they were Moshe's half-brothers)
- e) Siblings (King Saul's children)