

June 14, 2014

SH'LACH L'CHA

Send for yourself

The *Torah* portion, *Sh'lach l'cha*, is both thrilling and frightening. HaShem commanded Moshe to send spies into the land of Canaan to see what it was like. The question that immediately crossed my mind is, "Why would HaShem command such a thing." He already knew what the land was like - after all, he created it. Indeed, He had already described it as a land flowing with milk and honey way back in Exodus chapter 3. He already knew about the people who lived there. He knew that there were giants and walled cities. Moshe was on speaking terms with HaShem and trusted Him so he was only following orders when He sent men to search the land of Canaan. To Moshe, this was a slam/dunk. God said He was giving the land to the Israelites, so Moshe believed it, and that settled it. He was already singing, "This land is your land, this land is my land." But Moshe dutifully followed orders and sent the spies on a fact finding mission. They were to find out if the people were weak or strong, few or many; whether they lived in tents or strongholds, and if the land was rich or poor. He did not mention to them was that this was a test and that they had better pass.

So. . . the spies came back with the facts alright. They agreed that the land was flowing with milk and honey, and that the fruit of the land was large and plentiful. They said that the people were strong and lived in walled cities. But then they had to offer their own opinion that they were like grasshoppers compared to the men living there and that the land devours its settlers. Really - who would want to go up against those odds?

Even though all of the Israelites had seen with their own eyes that HaShem had done miracles to deliver them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and gave them *manna* and quail to eat, they listened to the evil report of the ten spies instead of the encouraging words of Caleb and Joshua. Joshua and Caleb got it right because they, like Moshe, trusted HaShem and knew that He would see them through. The other ten were seeing the situation through human eyes and unbelief and, therefore, failed the test.

My question is, do we inherit the anxieties of the ten spies, or do we have an attitude of trust and faith to help us overcome fear and negative thinking? Ten failed the test - two passed. How about you?

Hebrew Numbers 13:32

English Numbers 13:31-33

Haftarah Joshua 2:9-11

B'rit Chadasha Hebrews 3:8-13