

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Shelach

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

When Acceding Is Not Coercion but Volition

Enabling A Subversive Force Of Action

- 1. The Jews asked to send spies to scout out the land.
- 2. G-d said: I've told them that it is a good land, if they wish to send spies they can; *Moshe* acceded.
- 3. *Midrash*: The Jews understood they could not reveal their true intent to *Moshe* that they lacked in faith.
- 4. They said they were concerned G-d's name should not be desecrated.
- 5. G-d said we will find houses filled with wealth; the Canaanites will surely bury their wealth.
- 6. Why wouldn't *Moshe* have been concerned had they presented their real intent?

- 7. Torah: You will eat to be sated in the Sabbatical year.
- 8. Midrash: You will eat a miniscule amount & be sated.
- 9. Torah: "If you will ask what will we eat if we don't plant etc. I will command my blessing: the 6th year will have a 3 year yield."
- 10. Sephorno: "If you have faith, the less will be equivalent of the more. If you don't, you will have a 3 year yield."
- 11. If Jews have faith, the word of G-d will come to fruition; if not, you must locate the the wealth to avert a desecration of G-d's name.

Securing Leadership Through Augmentation

- 1. Moshe adds the letter Yud to Yehoshua's name.
- 2. Yud connotes a supplication that Yehoshua be saved from the machinations of the spies.
- 3. There were 12 spies; 10 were evil and 2 were devoutly righteous.
- 4. Why did Moshe not pray for Caleb?
- 5. Ethics Of Our Father's: Moshe transmitted the *Torah* to *Yehoshua*.
- 6. Yehoshua was responsible to transmit the *Torah* in its perfect form as it was given at Sinai to *Moshe*.
- 7. Rashi: Yehoshua was the dedicated student of Moshe who never departed from the Tent.
- 8. Eldad and Meidad prophesized Yehoshua would be his successor: Moshe therefore prayed that he should not be influenced.



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Engendering A Metamorphosis Through One's Alignment

- 1. The spies chosen were initially devoutly righteous.
- 2. They only became evil when returning with ominous reports.
- 3. Ten of the twelve spies said they could not go because it is a land that devours its inhabitants.
- 4. The spy mission lasted 40 days from the time they embarked until they returned.
- 5. When they returned, the *Torah* states the went and they returned.
- 6. Midrash: they returned as they went.
- 7. As when they returned it was with an evil intent they went with an evil intent.

- 8. The two verses are contradictory.
- 9. Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh: When one assumes the position as agent one is linked to the one he represents.
- 10. If The one represented has a lack of faith it will impact on the agent negatively.
- 11. Since The Jewish People had a lack of faith they impacted negatively on their representatives, the spies.
- 12. When they initially were chosen they represented nobody.
- 13. Upon departure were they linked to the Jewish People.

When A Test Is Not A Test

- 1. The Jews asked to send spies to scout out the land.
- 2. G-d said: I've told them that it is a good land; there is no need to send spies...
- 3. When they send spies, I will give them a setting for them to err and they will not inherit the land.
- 4. They were only authorized to send spies to fail to understand why they are not worthy to enter into the land.
- 5. Conventionally, a test is to determine one's ability...
- 6. If it is beyond one's ability, it is not a test but a definite failure.
- 7. Regarding the spies: There never was a consideration they would succeed due their lack of faith.
- 8. It was only for them to understand they were unworthy.



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G-d, Necessitating the Spies

Before the Jewish people were about to enter into the Land, they requested of *Moshe* to send scouts to scout out the Land. *Moshe* consulted with G-d Who responded, "Send for yourself men...."

Rashi: "Moshe consulted the Divine Presence. G-d said to him, 'I have already told them what to expect in the Land. I told them that I was taking them out of Egypt to a good Land that flows with milk and honey. I swear on their O lives that I will create a setting that will cause them to misunderstand what they see and cause them to fail. As a result they will not be worthy of inheriting the Land that I had promised them."

Midrash: The request to send spies is analogous to a king who proposed a princess to his son for the sake of marriage. The king described her as a woman who possessed exceptional qualities. She was poised, cultured, and beautiful. The prince said to his father,

"I will only be agreeable to marry her if I see her first." The king said to his son, "If my word is not a sufficient basis for you to marry this woman, then you will not merit to have her."

G-d took the Jewish people out of Egypt with revealed miracles that the world had never witnessed. He split the Sea on their behalf and destroyed their Egyptian masters. He provided them with the manna, clouds of Glory and the wellspring of *Miriam* which sustained them in the desert.

After establishing His credibility to the Jewish people to such a degree, their request for sending spies to scout out the Land was considered a breach of faith, rendering them unworthy to enter into the Land. G-d said, "I will create a setting in which the Jewish people will fail and not enter into the Land."

If the initial request of the Jewish people to send spies was a demonstration of their lack of faith, why was it necessary for G-d to allow them to send spies to disqualify them from entering into the Land? Seemingly it would have been sufficient to punish them immediately for their lack of faith and not allow them to enter into the Land.

In the Book of *Bereishis*, after G-d promised *Avraham* that his progeny would inherit the Land, he asked G-d "How will I know that we will inherit the Land?" *Avraham* was concerned that since his offspring would spiritually fail in the future, they would forfeit their right to the land that G-d promised them. G-d responded to *Avraham* by saying, "(Because you asked me this question) You shall know that your offspring will be strangers in a land that is not their own..."

Gemara: Because Avraham had demonstrated a lack of faith by asking the question the Jewish people were to be exiled to Egypt. Regarding Avraham's failing, we see that G-d immediately addressed his failing, which was a lack of faith. He thus informed him through the Covenant between the Parts that ultimately his children would go into bondage and be afflicted until they would be redeemed.

However, regarding the failing of the Jewish people, G-d did not immediately inform them that they would not enter into the Land due to their lack of faith, but rather G-d created a setting in which they would fail and then it would be decreed that they would not enter.

The sin of the spies was a public desecration of G-d's Name. The Jewish people believed the ominous reports of the ten spies rather than the positive reports of *Yehoshuah* and *Caleiv*. The public desecration of G-d's Name seemingly could have been averted.

If G-d had punished the Jewish people immediately after they had requested to send spies, they would not have understood or appreciated the magnitude of their failure. They were not at the level to appreciate that although their request was a lack of faith, it was not sufficient reason to deny them entry into the Land.

In contrast, *Avraham* our Patriarch, because of his dimension of spirituality, was able to internalize and fully appreciate the inappropriateness of his question. Therefore, G-d immediately communicated to him the consequence of his question at the Covenant between the Parts.

In order for the Jewish people to appreciate their unworthiness so that they should not merit entering

into the Land, G-d allowed a setting which was a public desecration of His Name. He allowed the Jewish people to send spies and create a scenario and setting in which the events would be misinterpreted and cause the spies to return with slanderous reports about the Land.

However, if He had denied them entry into the Land because of their initial lack of faith, the Jewish people would have believed that G-d's Justice is not equitable. They would have believed that He was overly harsh.

We see from the incident of the spies that G-d was willing to allow His Name to be publically desecrated so that His Justice should not be seen as not equitable. In addition, G-d wanted the Jewish people to appreciate their failing and understand that they were truly unworthy.

The ramifications of G-d's decision to allow them to fail to this degree ultimately brought about the tragedies of the Ninth of Av, which was the night the spies returned and the Jewish people bewailed their fate. G-d said, "Because you have cried a baseless crying, you will have reason to cry in the future."

Subsequently both Temples were destroyed and numerous other tragedies occurred on the same day that the Jewish people believed the slanderous reports of the spies. We are still suffering to this day from those failings of the Jewish people in the desert.

Yehoshuah's Greater Susceptibility to the Influences of the Spies

Before the spies were sent to scout out the Land, Moshe added the letter "yud" to Yehoshuah's name changing his name from Hoshea to 'Yehoshuah.'

Rashi: Moshe added the letter "yud" to the name Hoshea so that he should have special Divine Assistance to be protected from the plotting of the spies, not to be affected by them.

Midrash: "He (Moshe) called Hoshea, 'Yehoshuah' so that he should be protected from this evil generation."

Seemingly, the protection that *Yehoshuah* needed was from the evil spies who accompanied him and not the entire generation.

Chazal: Although the spies were righteous when they were chosen by G-d, they subsequently became evil.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: The transformation of the spies from righteous to evil is based on the principle of agency.

Gemara: If one appoints an agent to carry out an act on his behalf, the agent assumes the status of the one who appointed him and his actions are attributed to the one who commissioned him to be his agent (shaliach shel adam k'moso).

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: Based on this principle, if the agent should represent individuals who lack faith or who are corrupted in their spirituality, the linkage between the two will affect the agent negatively.

Although the spies were initially devoutly righteous and men of special spiritual acclaim, because they were the agents of the Jewish people who lacked faith in G-d, they were affected negatively. The clarity that the princes of the tribes initially had before becoming the agents of the Jewish people was lost.

This was the basis for their negative evaluation of the events that they had witnessed in the Land. All that they had seen was processed within this context. It was because of this linkage that *Yehoshuah* needed to be protected from the evil effect of the generation.

If Moshe had prayed to protect Yehoshuah from the evil of the generation, why did he not also do so for Caleiv?

Anaf Yosef: Moshe prayed for Yehoshuah more than any of the other spies because although he was devoutly righteous, there was a blemish in the spirituality of his lineage that needed to be addressed.

When one sins, a negative force creates an angel representing the evil that was done, which engenders more of the same in order to bring about more evil (aveira goreris aveira). When one sins, one not only affects himself but also his progeny.

Because Yosef (the Patriarch of the tribe of *Ephraim*) communicated negative information about his brothers to his father *Yaakov*, his spirituality was negatively affected as well as that of his progeny.

Since Yehoshuah descended from Yosef and was the prince of the tribe of Ephraim, his spirituality was in jeopardy due to the tale bearing of Yosef. Moshe understood Yehoshuah's susceptibility to evil speech and therefore added the letter 'yud' to his name in

order to counter the weakness from this negative force in his line.

In addition to one's own merits, one relies on the merit of his forefathers. However, if one's forefathers failed spiritually, this failure is not visited upon their descendants unless they emulate the evil behavior of their forefathers. If so, how could the imperfection that Yosef brought about regarding his own spirituality, negatively impact upon Yehoshuah who was a tzaddik?

Since there was a spiritual blemish in Yehoshuah's line regarding the area of *lashon hara*, he did not have the merit of his forefathers to protect him against the effects of the evil speech of the spies, and he was therefore vulnerable to their evil influence.

Moshe needed to be more concerned for him than for Caleiv who was a descendant of Yehudah. Yehudah did not have the failing of Yosef in this area. Therefore, Moshe needed to take special initiative to add the letter 'yud' to Yehoshuah so that he should be Divinely Protected.

Moshe's Blessing to Yehoshuah

Moshe called Hoshea Bin Nun "Yehoshuah."

Rashi: The "yud" signifies that "The Name of G-d - 'Ka' should come to the aid of Yehoshuah in order to protect him from the plotting of the spies."

Kli Yakar: The letter 'yud' that was added to Yehoshuah's name represents the appellation of G-d - 'Ka.' Why did Moshe specifically choose the appellation of 'Ka' to be associated with Yehoshuah in order to provide him with protection?

When Moshe instructed the spies, regarding their entry into the Land, he told them to enter through the Negev. When the spies returned, they said, 'Amalek is located in the Negev.'

Rashi: In the past, the Jewish people were attacked by Amalek. Moshe believed that Yehoshuah would not participate in the plotting of the spies since he was the one who led the Jewish people in battle against Amalek. After that battle Yehoshuah was assured to be victorious against Amalek because of the oath that G-d had taken with His Name (the appellation 'Ka'). "Ki yad aal keis Ka..." - For the hand is on the Throne of G-d: Hashem maintains a war against Amalek..."

Moshe added the Name 'Ka' to Yehoshuah's name so that he should remember the oath that G-d had taken with His Name 'Ka'.

Gemara: There was no one who was as proficient in speaking lashon hara as Haman the evil one. Through his lashon hara, he was able to bring about the decree to annihilate every Jewish man, woman, and child. One of the things that he said to Achashverosh the Emperor was that if a fly would fall into the cup of wine of a Jew, he would take out the fly and drink it. However, if the Emperor would merely touch the wine of a Jew, he would not drink it but rather spill it out because it would be rendered unfit.

Haman was the personification of Amalek. The weapon which he used to seal the fate of the Jewish people was his negative power of speech, lashon hara.

"A deprecator (letz) you shall smite, but a fool (pessi) could be made wise." (Proverbs)

Midrash: "A deprecator you should smite" refers to Amalek and "a fool you could make wise" refers to Yisro.

Because one cannot reason with the deprecator, he must be smitten since he has no capacity to appreciate any degree of spirituality. Regardless of what he will witness, he will remain unaffected and unimpressed.

Chazal: After the splitting of the Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian armies, the Jewish people assumed a special aura in the eyes of the nations of the world. The world trembled in awe before them.

Despite the display of awesomeness of G-d's Might and Power, *Amalek* nevertheless attacked His people without any fear or hesitation.

Chazal: Amalek's attack on the Jewish people is analogous to a fool who jumps into a scalding bath that others are afraid to approach out of fear of being scalded. However after the fool jumps into the bath and is severely scalded, the bath is cooled down for others to enter.

As a result of the attack of *Amalek*, the awesome aura of G-d and the Jewish people was diminished in the eyes of the world. *Amalek* was only able to act in this manner because of his characteristic of "deprecator" (*letz*). They do not have the capacity to appreciate or esteem anything that has relevance to G-d. To the contrary, they are opposed to His existence. There is

no basis to enter into intellectual dialogue to attempt to convince *Amalek*. Therefore, the only way to deal with *Amalek* is to destroy them.

When one speaks *lashon hara* about his fellow, although his fellow may have many positive qualities, at the moment the person speaks *lashon hara*, he only sees and internalizes the negative of that person while ignoring all the positive.

If a person would see the totality of his fellow at the time he wants to speak negatively about him, he would definitely refrain. It is only because one only focuses on the negative that he is able to speak *lashon hara*.

Because *Amalek* did not have the capacity to appreciate any positive quality of the Jewish people, since they are a representation of G-d, they were able to attack the Jewish people after the closing of the Sea.

Similarly, when *Haman* spoke negatively about the Jewish people, he only saw them in the most negative light because he did not appreciate their intrinsic positive value, which is their spirituality.

Gemara: "The progeny of Esav can only fall into the hands of the progeny of Rachel." The Jewish people were never victorious in a battle against Amalek (descendants of Esav) unless the progeny of Rachel participated in that battle.

Rachel our Matriarch is identified by the characteristic of "silence." When her father *Lavan* had given her sister *Leah* in marriage to *Yaakov* in her place, she remained silent and did not reveal to *Yaakov* what was happening.

Prior to the marriage, the gifts that Yaakov had sent to Rachel were given by Lavan to Leah. Rachel again remained silent, understanding that by mentioning anything, it would cause greater damage.

In order to preserve her spirituality and the future of the Jewish people, Rachel chose to suppress her feelings regarding her father *Lavan*.

Yosef shepherded the flocks of his father Yaakov. He was the favored and most special son of Yaakov our Patriarch. Yosef brought evil reports to his father regarding the behavior of his brothers, which was considered to be lashon hara. Ultimately, it led to him being sold as a slave to Egypt.

Rather than suppressing his power of speech and dealing with the situation differently, he did not.

Because of his young age, Yosef did not demonstrate the characteristic of his mother Rachel, which was "silence."

After being sold into slavery, Yosef recognized the cause of his failing and appreciated the value of silence.

Yehoshuah, being a descendant of Yosef who initially had relevance to the negative trait of speaking *lashon hara*, led the battle against *Amalek* who represents this characteristic.

The appellation of G-d that negates their representation is "Ka." Therefore, Yehoshuah was given the letter "yud" because he had the capacity to appreciate the negativity of that characteristic.

The Evil of the Spies Could have been Averted

"Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moshe... Was it only to Moshe that Hashem spoke? Did He not speak to us as well?"

As a result of speaking critically (*lashon hara*) about *Moshe, Miriam* became a leper and needed to be sent out of all the camps of Israel for seven days.

"G-d said to Moshe, 'Let her be quarantined outside the camp for seven days, and then she may be brought in.' So Miriam was quarantined....and the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in."

Midrash: During the seven-day period that Miriam was sequestered outside of the camp, the entire Jewish people (600,000 males above the age of 20), Divine Presence, and the Clouds of Glory, waited for her to recover.

G-d acknowledged *Miriam* in this context as a reward that was measure for measure. When *Moshe's* mother *Yocheved* could no longer conceal his birth in Egypt, she put him into a box and placed it into the Nile.

"Miriam stood at a distance and waited to see what would happen to him." In the merit of waiting a moment to see what the fate of her brother would be, G-d rewarded her measure for measure. Just as she had waited for Moshe, so too did the Divine Presence, the Clouds of Glory, and the entire Jewish people wait for her to recover.

By causing the entire Jewish people to wait for *Miriam* to recover from her leprosy, one would think that her sin becoming public knowledge would be considered a disgrace and not a reward. Seemingly, it would have been better for the Jewish people to continue to travel and her failing would have gone unnoticed. Nevertheless, *Chazal* tell us that it was a great reward that *G*-d had given *Miriam* that was considered measure for measure.

Midrash: "Why is the portion of the spies juxtaposed to the portion of *Miriam*? Although these evil people saw what happened to *Miriam* they did not take heed to the moral lesson (*musar*)."

Miriam's leprous status came about as a result of her speaking lashon hara about her brother Moshe. She had spoken critically about his behavior, that he had separated himself from his wife.

When the spies returned from Canaan, they came back with ominous reports that slandered the Land and G-d before the entire Jewish people. In fact, the ten spies were not only sinners; they caused the entire Jewish people to sin and to believe their interpretation of the events they witnessed in *Canaan*.

The incident of *Miriam* should have taught the spies not to speak negatively in a context of *lashon hara* just because one believes that his perception of truth is correct.

Because of their slanderous reports, the Jewish people were overwhelmed with despair. "The entire assembly raised up and issued its voice; the people wept that night...."

Gemara: In response to their weeping, G-d said, "Because you cried for naught, this day (*Tisha B'Av*) shall be a day of crying for all generations." All the future tragedies that will befall the Jewish people will come on this day.

Consequently, the First and Second Temple were destroyed on the ninth of *Av.* In addition, the destruction of the community of *Beitar* and the city of Jerusalem was plowed under on the Ninth of *Av.*

All of these tragedies only came about because the Jewish people chose to believe the spies and not *Yehoshuah* and *Caleiv*, demonstrating their lack of faith in G-d. The incident of the spies affected the Jewish people on the most devastating level until the end of time.

G-d made *Miriam's* spiritual failing public knowledge so that it could serve as a model and lesson to the entire Jewish people regarding speaking *lashon hara*. If the spies would have learned the lesson as they should have, the tragedies that followed would have never occurred.

Despite their negative perception of the Land, since G-d had said the Land was truly good and flowing with milk and honey, they would have reconsidered their evaluation. They would have put their observations in another context than they had.

Had the spies not given their slanderous reports, the Jewish people would have entered into the Land and the Temple would have been built resulting in the coming of *Moshiach* and the perfection of Creation.

However, because they did not heed the lesson of *Miriam*, their actions resulted in unfathomable tragedy. *Miriam*'s incident, although it was an embarrassment for her, its value of being public knowledge was unlimited because she served as the model for the spies to make the proper choice. However, they failed by not making the proper choice.

The Resiliency of the Jewish Soul

The spies who were sent to scout out the Land returned with slanderous reports. They said, "It is a Land that devours its inhabitants." Rather than trusting G-d, and perceiving it in a positive context, they said to Moshe, "We will not go in."

As a result of the sin of the spies, G-d decreed that the generation that was between the ages of 20 and 60 should perish in the desert over a 40-year period.

"Hashem spoke to Moshe saying ...When you will bring a fire-offering to Hashem – an elevation offering or a feast offering...or a free-will offering, or on your festivals, to produce a satisfying aroma to Hashem... the one who brings the offering must bring a meal offering...and wine for a libation..."

After the sin of the spies, if one were to bring an offering (communal or personal) it needed to be accompanied with a meal offering and a wine libation. Why does the *Torah* choose to mention these aspects of the sacrifice at this particular time?

Sforno: "Until the sin of the golden calf, it was sufficient to bring the animal alone to be a burnt offering, without the need for a meal offering or wine libations. The animal alone was sufficient to bring about the full effect of the sacrifice."

Ramban: An offering is referred to by the *Torah* as *korban* (derived from the word *l'karev* – to bring close) because an offering activates and coalesces various spiritual forces to bring about a specific spiritual result.

Prior to the sin of the golden calf, the Jewish people were at a spiritual level that bringing the animal alone as a sacrifice was sufficient to bring about the desired spiritual result. However, after the sin, the Jewish people regressed and became spiritually deficient, thus causing the need to supplement the burnt offering with a meal offering and wine libations in order to bring about the same result.

Sforno: Where do we find that bringing the animal alone was sufficient? We see this regarding the sacrifices of Abel, Noach, and Avraham. They brought burnt offerings without the need to be accompanied with anything else.

At the time of the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai, the youths also brought burnt offerings that were not accompanied with a meal offering and libations. However, as a result of the spiritual diminishment of the Jewish people that was caused by the sin of the golden calf, when a communal offering was brought, it was no longer sufficient for it to be brought by itself. It needed to be supplemented with the meal offering and libations.

As the Jewish people regressed to a further degree as a result of the sin of the spies, even when one brought a personal offering, it needed to be supplemented with a meal offering and libations. It was no longer sufficient to bring the meat offering by itself.

Gemara: If a non-Jew violates any of the seven Noahide laws, he is liable for the death penalty. If the non-Jew steals, he is liable for the death penalty; however, if the Jew steals, although it is considered to be a transgression of a negative commandment, he does not need to be put to death to be atoned.

If the sin of stealing is so grave that one must die to be atoned, why does the Jew not require the death penalty to bring about atonement? When one sins, it causes a diminishment in one's spirituality. One then needs to be spiritually rehabilitated. Punishment is a manner of atonement that brings about this result. The degree of spiritual diminishment to the individual caused by the sin will determine the degree of atonement that is needed to rehabilitate one's spirituality.

The spiritual make up of a Jew and non-Jew are not alike. The spirituality of the non-Jew is less viable than that of the Jew who possesses a more advanced dimension of spirituality, thus causing him to be more resilient to the affect of sin.

If a non-Jew violates any one of the seven Noahide laws, the damage to his spirituality is so severe that only death can bring about sufficient atonement to restore that individual's spirituality. This is not so regarding the Jew, because his dimension of spirituality is more advanced.

Before the sin of the golden calf, the spirituality of the Jew was at its most advanced and viable level. If a Jew would bring an offering, it was sufficient to only bring the animal for the burnt offering in order to be effective.

However, after the sin of the golden calf, the level of spirituality of the Jew was diminished and became less resilient. In order to bring about atonement, the communal offering needed to be supplemented with the meal offering and libations.

After the sin of the spies, their spirituality was further reduced and they needed an even greater degree of initiative to be rehabilitated. Even the personal offering needed to be supplemented with a meal offering and libations.

Gemara: If a prophet were to communicate a law that was not communicated to the Jewish people by Moshe, he is deemed to be a false prophet. When Moshe passed away, the transmission of Torah to the Jewish people came to an end.

Throughout the life of *Moshe* the laws of the *Torah* evolved based on the spiritual status and needs of the Jewish people, such as the sacrifices (whether or not they needed to be supplemented). After *Moshe* passed away the evolution of *Torah* came to an end and whatever is contained in the *Torah* is sufficient to maintain and advance the spirituality of the Jewish people.

Chazal: If G-d had not taken out the Jewish people from Egypt at the exact moment that He had, they would have been gone into the spiritual oblivion because they had fallen to the forty-ninth level of impurity. However after receiving the *Torah* at Sinai and being taken as G-d's people, the spirituality of the Jew became eternal.

Gemara: "A Jew who sins (even if he had become an apostate) is still considered to be a Jew." Once Moshe passed away, whatever was needed to rehabilitate and maintain the spirituality of the Jewish people is recorded in the Torah, and it will be sufficient until the end of time.



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