



Shelach Lecha

Bamidbar (Numbers) 13:1 - 15:41

The journey from Mt. Sinai to the Land of Israel was a difficult one. There is ample evidence within the Torah that conditions were harsh and the people divided. In this week's Torah reading, *Parshat Shelach Lecha*, the divisions in the camp become all too apparent.

The *Parshah* begins as G-d commands Moses to send 12 men to scout the Land of Israel and to report what they find. It is interesting to note how the 12 men chosen for this task differed from the 12 chosen to help Moses conduct the census which began the book of *Bamidbar*. In the beginning of *Bamidbar*, those chosen to help Moses were leaders of their respective tribes who had been born into positions of leadership. The "spies" that Moses chooses in this week's *Parshah* were those who had achieved their greatness and reputation not by nobility of birth, but by their own outstanding deeds.

After 40 days the spies returned with a glowing report of the Land of Israel and its bounty. Ten of the spies took the position that the inhabitants of the land of Israel were simply too powerful to conquer. Only two, Caleb and Joshua, were confident of victory.

Upon hearing this news the people were disheartened and openly spoke of returning to Egypt. Later they were punished for this lack of faith but the dissension in the camp would remain a factor throughout the remainder of the Book of *Bamidbar*.

The *Parshah* concludes with the *Mitzvah of Tzitzit*; the obligation to tie fringes to the corners of our clothing. The *Torah* explains that the purpose of *Tzitzit* is to remind us of G-d's commandments, and our paramount responsibility to observe them.



Jewish Community Center of Paramus
E. 304 Midland Ave., Paramus NJ 07652
Phone: (201) 262-7691 Fax: (201) 262-6516
© 2007 Jewish Community Center of Paramus