



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

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HOW MUCH OF OUR LIFE IS SHAPED MORE BY FEAR THAN BY REALITY?

In פרשת שלח, the return from מרגלים terrified. They describe giants, fortified cities, and impossible battles. The תורה records their report, but חז"ל teach that the real failure lay not in what they saw — but in how they interpreted it.

After everything בני ישראל had already experienced — קריעת ים סוף, מתן תורה, and the הכבוד, משה רבינו still concluded that entering the Land was impossible. Instead of interpreting challenges through the lens of השגחה, they reframed everything in terms of fear.

Sometimes we do the same thing. We know there are things we need to face — conversations, responsibilities, personal growth — but instead of admitting fear, we build explanations that make avoidance feel logical. Fear becomes disguised as “realism.”

That is what made כלב different. While the other spies were swept up in panic and public pressure, כלב remained steady and loyal to the truth. The תורה describes that he had (במדבר י"ד:כ"ד) “רוח אחרת עמו”, a different spirit. He refused to be carried away by the fear around him.

The punishment reflected the mistake itself. Hashem says, “יום לשנה יום לשנה”

(במדבר י"ד:ל"ד)— each day of the spies' journey becomes a year in the desert. When a person refuses to move forward, they can remain stuck far longer than they ever intended.

חז"ל teach that when the nation cried that night, Hashem responded, “אתם בכיתם בכיה של חנם ואני אקבע לכם בכיה לדורות” (תענית כ"ט ע"א). Fear that is not confronted does not simply disappear — it shapes future generations.

The מרגלים had everything they needed: Hashem's promise, and open miracles in front of them. Yet they still hesitated.

The question the פרשה leaves us with is simple but uncomfortable: how often do we let fear define our decisions, even when we already have everything we need to move forward?



SHALOM NUER
9TH GRADE, ZICHRON YAAKOV

HOW A NAME INFLUENCED COURAGE

In this week's parshah, we see that even when faced with death threats, Yehoshua and Calev have the courage to stand up against nearly all of Am Yisrael and stand up for what they believe in. Where and how did they get the courage to stand up against Am Yisrael and speak the truth?

Well, we should first inspect who they are and what shaped them to have such courage

in such a dangerous situation. Yehoshua was Moshe's disciple, and Calev had so much faith in Hashem that he went and prayed in Chevron for the strength to not be influenced by the ten other meraglim. According to Rashi, Moshe also went and prayed for Yehoshua and changed his name from Hoshea to Yehoshua, asking Hashem to save him from the council of the meraglim.

When a name is changed in the Tanakh, it is because of success in a divine struggle. For example, Yaakov was named Yisrael after wrestling with an angel, and Avram became Avraham after he left his home and journeyed to Israel. So too here, when Yehoshua went and tried to calm the angry and fearful horde, standing up in defense of Moshe and Aharon, he proved that his name change was not in vain. It had, in fact, given him the strength to stand up and do what is right. Ultimately, that is what enabled him to stand up to thousands of people in such a dangerous situation, demonstrating the kind of courage that Hashem wants from us. ■

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