

# PARASHAT SHELACH-LECHA

## *Numbers 13:1–15:41*

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*Parashat Shelach-Lecha* describes how the twelve spies, each representing a tribe of Israel, scout the Land of Israel. After forty days they return. Ten of them report that the land is fruitful, but its cities and countryside are filled with powerful warriors—giants. Two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, disagree. They urge the people to conquer the land. Hearing the divided report, the people protest against Moses and Aaron, telling them, “Let us go back to Egypt.” God threatens to abandon the people for their disloyalty and to create a new people for Moses to lead. Moses pleads with God to pardon the people, pointing out that God’s reputation is at stake. He argues that, if the people are destroyed, it will appear that God freed them from Egypt to crush them in the desert. The people are told that, because of their lack of faith, they will die before entering the Land of Israel, and only after forty years of wandering in the desert will their children conquer the land. Offerings to be presented at the sanctuary are described, as is the treatment of the *ger*, or “stranger,” who resides among the Israelites. The Israelites are warned that the penalty for gathering wood on the Sabbath is death by stoning. They are commanded to attach a blue cord or thread to the fringes at the corners of their garments as a reminder of their responsibility to fulfill all the commandments of Torah.

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### OUR TARGUM

• 1 •

**G**od instructs Moses to send twelve spies, one from each tribe, to scout the Land of Israel. “See what kind of country it

is,” they are told. They are instructed to investigate its cities, people, soil, and forests and “bring back some of the fruit of the land.”

The scouts spend forty days exploring the land. Before they return they stop in the valley of Eshkol near Hebron, where they cut a cluster of

grapes and gather some pomegranates and figs. Upon their return, they show the fruits to the Israelites, proving that the land they scouted is indeed flowing “with milk and honey.” However, ten of the spies frighten the Israelites. After displaying the fruit of the land, these ten tell stories of the powerful people, the large fortified cities, and the dangerous inhabitants.

The report terrifies the community. Caleb, however, seeking to assure the people, says, “Let us by all means go up [to the land], and we shall gain possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.”

Spreading even more fear, the ten spies claim that the country “is one that eats up its inhabitants. All the people we saw are giants,” they say. “We looked like grasshoppers to ourselves, and so we must have looked to them.”



The entire community of Israelites turns on Moses and Aaron, shouting at them, “Why is

*Adonai* taking us to that land to fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be carried off! . . . Let us head back for Egypt.”

At that point, Joshua and Caleb tell the community that the land is “exceedingly good” and that, with faith in God, the people will conquer it. Rejecting their counsel, the people threaten to pelt them with stones.

God tells Moses that, since the people have no faith, they will be destroyed. “I will provide you with a nation far more numerous than they!” Moses, like Abraham, responds by challenging God. “What will the Egyptians say when they see that God has freed the people only to kill them? What will the nations conclude about God’s power when it becomes known that God is powerless to bring them into the Promised Land?” (For Abraham’s challenge to God, see Genesis 18:16–33.)

Moses pleads with God to forgive the people for their lapse of faith. Agreeing, God declares, “*Adonai!* Slow to anger and abounding in kindness; forgiving iniquity and transgression . . .”

The people are told that for their lack of faith they will wander for forty years and that the entire generation of those who were freed from Egypt will die in the desert. Only their children, led by Caleb and Joshua, will go up to conquer the land.

Despite what they hear, the people declare that they have changed their minds and are now ready to conquer the land. Moses warns that they will not succeed. Defiantly, they attack and are shattered by the Amalekites and Canaanites at Hormah.

• 2 •

Moses instructs the people about the offerings by fire that they are to bring to the sanctuary. The people are advised to seek forgiveness for sins committed unintentionally by bringing sacrifices. Those who deliberately sin, however, will be punished.

Moses also tells them that the *ger*, “stranger” or “convert,” is to be treated like an Israelite: “The same ritual and the same rule shall apply to you and to the stranger who resides among you.”

·3·

Journeying through the wilderness, an Israelite is discovered gathering wood on the Sabbath. Because he has broken faith with the commandment to observe the Sabbath, he is put to death by stoning.

## THEMES

*Parashat Shelach-Lecha* contains two important themes:

1. The sin of the spies in not separating fact from fiction and truth from falsehood.
2. The meaning of wearing *tzitzit*, or “fringes.”

## PEREK ALEF: *What Was the Sin of the Spies?*

The Torah provides us with two versions of the story of the spies sent to scout the Land of Israel. *Parashat Shelach-Lecha* (Numbers 13:1–14:45) contains a much more extensive account than does *Parashat Devarim* (Deuteronomy 1:19–45). Both versions, however, agree that twelve tribal leaders are sent to explore the land.

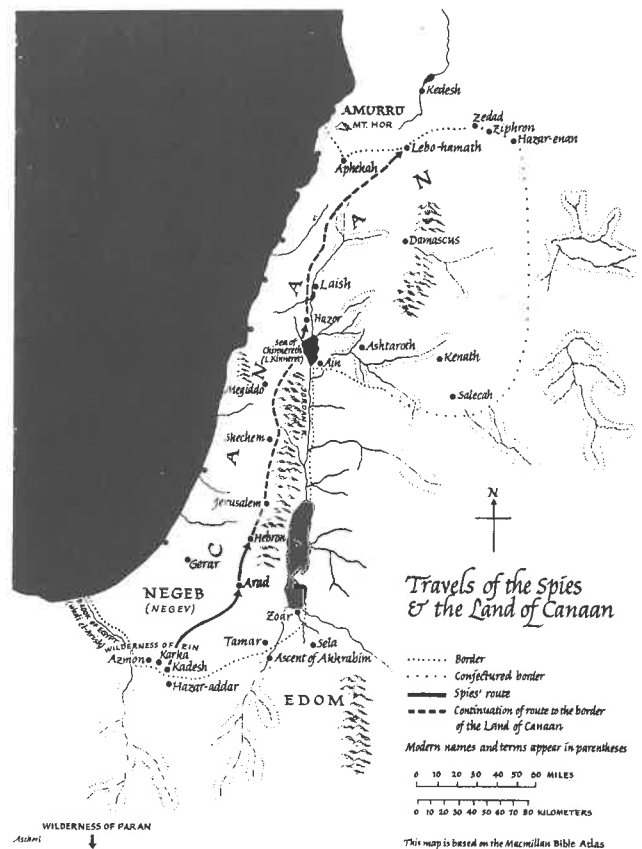
The spies return to the people in the wilderness after a forty-day journey and bring back ripe fruits. Ten of the twelve scouts report that it is “a land that flows with milk and honey,” *but* it is also a land of the Anakites, or “giants.” “We felt like grasshoppers in their sight,” they say. They report that it is also the land of the Amalekites, enemies of the Israelites.

Joshua and Caleb disagree with the ten other scouts, urging the people to go up and conquer the land.

In panic, the people protest to Moses: “Let us go back to Egypt.” Angered by the report of the spies and by the reaction of the people, God punishes them with forty years of wandering in the desert, a year for each of the forty days of the spies’ journey. The people are told that not one of the generation liberated from Egypt will enter the Land of Israel. Only their children, led by Joshua and Caleb, will victoriously enter the land.

·4·

Moses is told to instruct the Israelites to attach a cord of blue [a dye made from the blood of a rare mollusk] to the fringes at the corners of their garments. The fringes are to remind the people “to observe all the commandments and to be holy to God.”



Clearly something drastic has happened! The people who suffered long years of Egyptian slavery are condemned to wander in the wilderness

for forty years and to die there. What causes this catastrophe? What do the spies either say or do to bring on such severe punishment? What is their sin?

As we may imagine with so significant an event, there are a variety of views among Torah interpreters.

An author of an early rabbinic interpretation suggests that the spies, like Miriam, engage in the sin of slander. (See the discussion in *Parashat Beha'alotecha*, "Perek Bet.") Instead of remembering Miriam's punishment for publicly criticizing Moses, the spies return from their journey and, immediately and publicly, speak slanderously about the Land of Israel. They tell the people: "It is a land that eats up its inhabitants," meaning that the land is difficult to farm, its soil is of poor quality, and its air is polluted, bringing ill health. For their deliberate slander of the land, they and the generation accepting their report are punished. (*Numbers Rabbah* 16:2)

In his study *Moses as a Political Leader*, Aaron Wildavsky suggests that the sin of the spies is more serious than slander. The people have left Egypt with the promise of conquering the Land of Israel. This is their goal. The spies, says Wildavsky, return and take advantage of the people's anticipation of their report to "discredit the entire enterprise." That is their sin.

They conspire to convince the people that God is leading them not to a land of opportunity and plenty but to disaster. Reporting that the cities of the land are protected by high walls and guarded by powerful giants, they strike fear into the hearts of the people. They destroy their dreams and willingness to go forward to conquer the land. Because the spies kill the hopes of their people, they and their generation are condemned to wander and die in the wilderness. (University of Alabama Press, 1984, pp. 114–118)

Isaac Arama suggests that the sin of the spies was their rejection of the Land of Israel. "It is this rejection of the Land of Israel," argues Arama, a fifteenth-century commentator living in Spain during the reign of Ferdinand V and Isabella I, "that explains our tribulations and exile. . . . We shall never recover our spiritual and physical balance until we return to it." Since the spies

scorn and spurn the land and rally the people to tell Moses to take them back to Egypt, they are all condemned to die in the desert. Because of their disloyalty to the land, they are unworthy of reconquering it and rebuilding their nation.

Chasidic teacher Yitzhak Meir of Ger views the matter differently. He comments that the sin of the spies is not their plan to undermine the expectations of the people to settle the land but their actual carrying out of the plan after their scouting mission. Human beings, observes Rabbi Meir of Ger, are not held responsible for evil thoughts or for evil plans. They sin when they translate their evil plans into the reality of deeds. This is the sin of the spies. With their unfavorable report they turn a whole nation away from its goal of conquering their land. (A.Z. Friedman, *Wellsprings of Torah*, 2 vols., Judaica Press, New York, 1969, p. 306)



Other commentators also accuse the spies of misleading the people. For example, Sfora explains that, when they mention the Anakites, or "giants," they mean to suggest that the climate of the land is so polluted that only the strongest among them will survive. When they claim that they felt like "grasshoppers," the spies are deliberately exaggerating the physical size of their enemies to frighten the people.



Peli

By observing that "it is a land that eats up its people," modern commentator Pinchas Peli argues that the spies are conducting a "demoralizing campaign," deliberately deceiving the people with lies about the land they have just scouted. (*Torah Today*, B'nai B'rith Books, Washington, D.C., 1987, pp. 169–172)



Leibowitz

"The spies," comments Nehama Leibowitz, "knew their job well. First they sing the praises of the Promised Land, aware that a lie to succeed must have a modicum of truth in it to give it an appearance of objectivity. They knew how to pass from an apparently objective report to a subjective expression of opinion." For instance, they tell the people, "We came to the land you sent us to; it does indeed flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit." Then they say, "But we saw giants there." It is for the sin of inciting the people to fear about going up to conquer the land, for lying to them, for misleading them with deliberate exaggerations, and for not separating fact from fiction that the spies are punished. (See *Studies in Bemidbar*, pp. 135–146.)

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson agrees that the sin of the spies is in their deception of the people. However, he points out that they also mislead themselves. They are pious and good and worry about the spiritual life of their people. However, they fear, explains Schneerson, that the people will enter the Land of Israel and become so busy with materialistic concerns, with work, feeding their families, building their homes, creating entertainments for themselves, and caring for their communities that they will have "progressively less time and energy for the service of God."

That, explains Schneerson, is what they mean when they said, "It is a land that eats up its inhabitants." Their sin is in misleading the people and themselves with "their opinion . . . that spirituality flourishes best in seclusion and withdrawal." The spies, concludes Schneerson, "were wrong. The purpose of a life lived in Torah is not the elevation of the soul: It is the sanctification of the world . . . taking possession of the Land of Israel and making it a holy land." (*Torah Studies*, Lubavitch Foundation, London, 1986, pp. 241–242)



Ramban (Nachmanides)

Nachmanides disagrees with most of these interpretations. The spies, he contends, do not present any false facts, nor do they exaggerate what they saw. They show the people the fruit of the land, and they tell the truth about it. Their fault, argues Nachmanides, is in misunderstanding the purpose of their mission and in their manner of reporting about it.

They are sent, Nachmanides points out, on a "reconnaissance mission" with the task of bringing back strategic details on how best to conquer the land. Since Moses is preparing for war, their assignment is to return with details about the land and its people, which will guarantee victory. The entire future of the people depends upon their report.

Their sin, says Nachmanides, is the tone in which they deliver their information. Upon their return they begin speaking in glowing, positive terms about the wonderful fruit of the land; then, however, they turn negative. Using the word *efes*, or "but," they declare, "But the people of the land are powerful." That evaluation, concludes Nachmanides, "signifies something negative, beyond human capability, something impossible to achieve under any circumstances." It produces fear. Quite obviously it is the negative presentation by the spies that panics the people and causes them to reject conquering the Land of Israel.

#### *The positive versus the negative*

*Rabbi Abraham Chill notes that the spies were confronted with the negative dangers of conquering the land as opposed to the positive consequences victory would bring. They were faced with a positive versus a negative choice. "The tosafot deal with this enigma," says Chill, "by reasoning that, if one is confronted by the necessity to make a choice, the preference should be for positive thinking. . . . The dynamics of*

*positive thinking should supplant the debilitation of negative defense.” (The Sidrot, Geffen Publications, Jerusalem, 1983, p. 132)*

Nachmanides also accuses the spies of withholding valuable information. Moses asks them to determine whether their enemies are few or many. The scouts never furnish those crucial numbers. Furthermore, they compound their sin by seeking to undermine Moses' authority. Instead of delivering their report privately to him, they present it publicly to the people. Afterwards, adds Nachmanides, the ten spies go from tent to tent, spreading more of their “evil report.” It is the withholding of information and the deliberate undermining of Moses' authority that result in their punishment. (Commentary on Numbers 13:1–14:2)

Contemporary interpreter Rabbi Morris Adler suggests another reading of the spies' behavior. Their sin is the “subversion” of the people by the deliberate misuse of their position and power. Adler reminds us that the spies are not ordinary Israelites. They are carefully chosen leaders, “whose words carried great weight.” The people rely upon their judgment and trust them. When they lie about what they have seen, they destroy the people's confidence.

This story, says Adler, is a lesson of how “the prominent, the highly educated, the well-placed . . . undermined the morale of the people in a way that was just short of a brutal military assault. They breached the wall of the people's confidence; they brought panic and disillusionment as surely as if the enemy's legions had actually trampled upon the Israelites. This,” explains Adler, “was the kind of subversion that these princes in Israel practiced, and the result was almost the annihilation of the entire people.”

Why did the spies, these leaders of their people, engage in such subversion? Adler believes that they were pleased with the status quo of the desert. They opposed change. Everything was provided: food, water, shelter. Life was good enough for them. They did not want to take on the burden of conquering the Promised Land

nor the risk of losing the power and security they already possessed. That was their sin, Adler concludes. They wanted to pull down the blinds on all the pain and sorrow of the world and live in the security of their own safe desert. They chose to subvert the dream of achieving the Promised Land, where justice, freedom, and peace would prevail for all. (*The Voice Still Speaks*, pp. 301–305)

Adler's view of the spies' intentions is supported by one of the earliest comments on their mission. Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai (second century C.E.) told his students that “the spies went up to the Land of Israel with evil thoughts and returned with evil thoughts.” In other words, before they began their reconnaissance mission, they had already reached conclusions on what they would tell the people. What they would see or hear would not alter their opinions. On the contrary, they would use examples that supported their preconceived ideas, rejecting all others. That was their sin. They failed themselves and their people by closing their minds, by refusing to scout the land without prejudice or narrow-mindedness. (*Sotah* 35a; also Rashi on Numbers 13:26)

Why were they possessed with such preconceived notions? What might have caused the spies, these leaders of Israel, to bring back such a negative report? Why panic the people about conquering the land? A clue might be found in the last observation they share with the Israelites about the people of the land. In a moment of rare candor they say, “All the people that we saw in it are men of great size; we saw the Nephilim there—the Anakites are part of the Nephilim—and we looked like grasshoppers to ourselves, and so we must have looked to them.”

The spies reveal their low self-esteem. “We looked like grasshoppers to ourselves,” they say, indicating little respect for their capabilities. They see themselves as weaklings, powerless, without strength or imagination to overcome their enemies. Their lack of self-respect breeds self-contempt and fear of others.

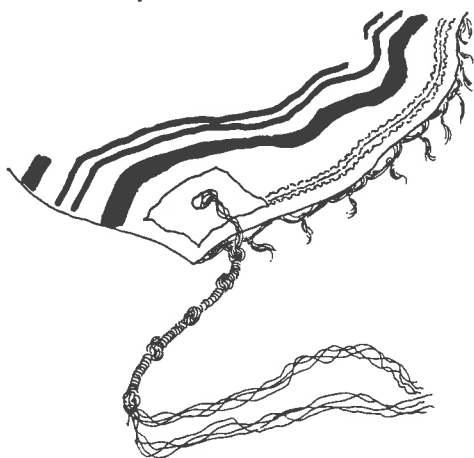
Psychologist Erich Fromm observes that “the affirmation of one's own life, happiness, growth, and freedom is rooted in one's capacity to love.”

We love productively only when we learn to love ourselves.

We can only conquer "Promised Lands" when we have regard for our talents and believe in our creative powers. The sin of the spies grows from their failure of self-love and self-respect. Perhaps that explains their punishment. Unable to appreciate themselves, they are condemned to wander and die in the desert. Only Joshua and Caleb, who refuse to see themselves as "grasshoppers," are worthy of entering the Promised Land.

### PEREK BET: *The Meaning of Wearing Tzitzit, or "Fringes"*

The Torah tradition concerns itself with nearly every aspect of human existence, including clothing. For example, it forbids women from dressing as men, men from dressing as women, and either from wearing *sha'atnez*, a garment made of a mixture of wool and linen. (Deuteronomy 22:5, 11) Of particular importance is the commandment on wearing *tzitzit*, or "fringes." It is not only found in our Torah portion but also in Deuteronomy 22:12.



Moses instructs the Israelites to wear *tzitzit* on the corners of their garments "throughout the generations." Each fringe is to include a *petil techelet*, or "blue thread." As for the purpose of the *tzitzit*, Moses tells the people: "Look at it [the fringe] and recall all the commandments of God and observe them, so that you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge. Thus

you shall be reminded to observe all My commandments and to be holy to your God. I *Adonai* am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I, *Adonai* your God." (Numbers 15:39–41)

Throughout the centuries Jewish men have been placing *tzitzit* on the four corners of a garment known as a *talit katan*, a "small prayer shawl," worn either over or under a shirt, and upon the four corners of the *talit* worn at prayer. The mitzvah to wear *tzitzit* is considered so important by the rabbis who composed the first prayers of the synagogue that they included it as one of four paragraphs recited each morning and evening after the *Shema*, the declaration of God's unity.

The *petil techelet*, however, did cause problems. Apparently the blue dye from which it was made either became impossible to acquire or the secret of its manufacture was lost. Some scholars speculate that it was made from the blood of a rare mollusk called *chilazon*, living off the coast of the Land of Israel. When the mollusk could no longer be found, the rabbis did not abandon the making and wearing of *tzitzit*. Instead, they deliberately overlooked the prescription of Torah and decreed that the fringe could be made without the *petil techelet*.

Clearly, they believed that wearing *tzitzit*, even without the *petil techelet*, was of great significance. As a matter of fact, both Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai and Rabbi Meir teach that "carefully fulfilling the mitzvah of wearing *tzitzit* guarantees seeing the face of God!" Others claim that "the mitzvah of wearing *tzitzit* is equal in importance to all of the commandments." (*Menachot* 43a; also Jerusalem Talmud, *Berachot* 1:2; *Nedarim* 25a)

What prompts such an evaluation? Why does Jewish tradition attach such importance to wearing *tzitzit*?



Rashi

Commenting on the word *tzitzit*, Rashi notes that its numerical value is 600 (*tzadei* = 90,

*yod* = 10, *tzadei* = 90, *yod* = 10, *tav* = 400) and that the fringe is tied with eight threads and five knots. Together the full numerical equivalent comes to 613, which is the number of commandments Rabbi Simlai, in the fourth century, found in the Torah.

Later Jewish tradition refers to these 613 commandments by the acronym *TaRYaG Mitzvot* (*tav* = 400, *resh* = 200, *yod* = 10, *gimel* = 3). Together they total 613 and are understood to be divided between 165 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments. Rashi maintains that wearing the *tzitzit* and “looking upon it [the fringe]” remind one of the obligation to fulfill all 613 commandments of Torah. (Commentary on Numbers 15:37ff.; also *Makot* 23b)

Rashi’s observation is drawn from a view expressed by earlier rabbinic commentators. They hold that, when Jews look upon the *tzitzit*, they are reminded of the commandments, and “looking leads to remembering them, and remembering them leads to doing them.” Since the performance of every mitzvah is important, the *tzitzit* function as a powerful symbol stimulating Jewish behavior. When worn and seen, they are a sign pointing to the carrying out of the commandments. (*Numbers Rabbah* 7:5)

In some communities Jews, while putting on the *talit* with its fringes, recite the following mystical prayer, capturing the symbolic meaning of the *tzitzit*: “For the purpose of unifying God’s name . . . and in the name of all Israel, I wrap myself in this *talit* and *tzitzit*. So let my soul and my 248 limbs and 365 veins [which is 613] be wrapped in the light of the *tzitzit*. . . . Through the fulfillment of this commandment may my soul, spirit, holy spark, and prayer be saved from all distractions. . . . And may the doing of this commandment be considered by God as important and fulfilling as all the particulars, details, and intentions of the 613 commandments that depend upon it.”

Noting that the Torah commandment for wearing *tzitzit* includes the instruction to “look at it [the fringe] . . . so that you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge,” the rabbis comment that the meaning of the *tzitzit* is more than a symbolic reminder to observe the commandments. It functions, as well, to preserve

ethical and, particularly, sexual purity. “The heart and eyes tend to mislead the body.” Our senses require direction and discipline, say the rabbis. That is the purpose of the *tzitzit*. They save those who wear them from evil temptations. (*Numbers Rabbah* 7:6)

The *tzitzit*, however, do not have magical powers. Pinchas Peli explains that the *tzitzit* “are not a talisman, an amulet to guard the person who wears them from demons and evil spirits.” Instead the fringes represent “the inner conscience of the religious person.”

Peli tells the talmudic story of the man who once hired a prostitute. She prepared a tempting room with seven beautiful beds in it. Lying naked on the bed, she invited him to join her. As he took off his clothing, his *tzitzit* struck him in the face, and he fell to the floor. When she inquired what was wrong, he told her that in seeing the *tzitzit* he had been reminded of his ethical duty. “They testify that I am doing something wrong!” he told her. Upon seeing how his faith functioned in his life, the woman decided to study and become a convert to Judaism. (“Torah Today” in the *Jerusalem Post*, June 18, 1986; *Menachot* 44a)

People, comments Peli, are absentminded, careless, forgetful of their obligations, and easily tempted into dangerous behavior. They often follow their eyes and hearts without calculating the consequences of what they are doing to themselves and others. The commandment to wear fringes is given to counter such tendencies, to alert us to our ethical and religious obligations.

In his discussion of the *tzitzit*, Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, brother of Torah commentator Nehama Leibowitz, draws a distinction between “ethical” and “religious” obligations. In an ethical decision, Leibowitz argues, a person relates to another as a human being and relates to treating that person as a human being with no criteria other than that it feels right or wrong. One might say, “I will do unto others as I would like them to do unto me,” or one might ask, “If everyone did what I am about to do, would the world be a just, kind, and peaceful place?”

On the other hand, religious decisions, explains Leibowitz, place a person before God and require that one live in accordance with the com-



mandments because that is what God demands. Rather than asking, “Does it feel right or wrong?” or “Is this what I would want others to do?” the only question one asks is: “What does God require of me?” *Tzitzit*, concludes Leibowitz, remind us not to go astray by following the whim of our heart or eyes. They are a powerful reminder of a Jew’s religious obligations to God. (*Weekly Parashah*, Shmuel Himmelstein, translator, Chemed Books, Brooklyn, New York, 1990, pp. 138–141)

Leibowitz’s view that the *tzitzit* remind the people of Israel’s obligations to God agrees with an early rabbinic observation that the fringes are an insignia of the people’s liberation and relationship to God. Before the Exodus, say the rabbis, the people were forced to wear badges of slavery, emblems indicating that they were the property of Pharaoh. The badges were a form of humiliation. Like the “yellow star” forced upon Jews by the Nazis, they identified the people as objects of scorn and targets for hatred and brutality.

Once liberated, the people are commanded to wear *tzitzit*. The fringes are a badge of freedom. They symbolize the liberation of the Jews: Jews will never again be slaves to other human beings and will serve only God. (*Menachot* 43; also *Shabbat* 57a)

David Wolfson, an early Zionist leader, provides another meaning for *tzitzit*. When Theodor Herzl asked him to make the preparations for the First Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, in 1897, Wolfson sought colors and a flag that would unite delegates from all over the world. He was faced with the problem of choosing a flag to decorate the congress hall. Wolfson relates: “Then it flashed upon my mind; but we do have a flag indeed! It’s white and blue: the *talit* in which we wrap ourselves during prayer. This *talit* (with its *tzitzit*) is our coat of arms, our emblem. Let us take out the *talit* and unfurl it before the eyes of Israel, before the eyes of all nations.” (See B.S. Jacobson, *Meditations on the Torah*, p. 223.)

Today, *tzitzit* continue to be prized by Jews

as a symbol of their historic covenant with God and as a badge of freedom and national existence. Looking at the fringes recalls ethical and ritual responsibilities. They are a reminder that the Jew, as a servant of God, must confront temptation and confusion between right and wrong behavior in light of what the 613 mitzvot of Jewish tradition demand. *Tzitzit* remain a proud badge of Jewish identity and commitment.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Most commentators seek an answer to the question: “What was the sin of the ten spies who returned from the Land of Israel?” Of all the different responses, which makes the most sense to you? Why?
2. Isaac Arama claims that the sin of the spies was their rejection of the Land of Israel. One of the first ministers of religion in the new State of Israel, J.L. Maimon, declared in 1951 that “anyone who spreads an evil report about the Land of Israel—even if it is true—is a spy.” Is it wrong to criticize one’s nation? Is it a sign of disloyalty? Is it disloyal for a Jew to “spread an evil report” about the State of Israel?
3. Modern philosopher Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel comments: “A *real symbol* is a visible object that represents something invisible; something present representing something absent. . . . The purpose of ritual art objects in Judaism is not to inspire love of God but to enhance our love of doing a mitzvah. . . .” How does the wearing of *tzitzit*, or “fringes,” fulfill Heschel’s definition of a Jewish religious symbol? How do the Shabbat candles, the *Havdalah* spice box, the *matzah* eaten at Pesach, the *mezuzah*, or the *lulav* and *etrog* waved during Sukot services “enhance our love of doing a mitzvah”?