

## Shabbat Times

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London	21:06	22:27	Cambridge	21:04	22:42
Manchester	21:22	23:06	Leeds	20:00	22:53
Birmingham	21:14	22:53	Liverpool	21:24	23:08
Oxford	21:07	22:43	Jerusalem	19:11	20:30

### Coming up...

- Our Bogrim's monthly whiskey tasting is back this week on Thursday, at the Fausts from 8:30 contact Joe on [Joe@bauk.org](mailto:Joe@bauk.org) for more information

- Summer Machane is on 3<sup>rd</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> August, email Akiva on [camps@bauk.org](mailto:camps@bauk.org) for more information

### Shabbat Debate

*Every week we will be writing weekly debates to discuss over Shabbat. The debates will then be continued on facebook, after Shabbat.*

Should we be punished for being honest just like the spies were?



Pictures from our leil iyun on Tuesday night, Miriam Peretz and our panellists.

# SHABBAT

פרשת שלח - לך

PARASHAT SHELACH-LECHA

The most widely distributed weekly Torah periodical written by our youth in the United Kingdom.



תנועת בני אקיבא  
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# LASHEM

## שבת לה'

### Free Choice and the Spies

Daniel Gutmann

Let's say that Hashem made man as a creature that cannot do wrong, then he may as well have made a perfect world, or no world at all. But Hashem's desire is the existence of an imperfect world, allowing us, to perfect it by choice. Our ability to err, lends significance to advances towards perfection.

The element of free choice, which was given to us by Hashem, is one of the greatest and most overlooked elements of life known to man

The concept of free choice exists on two levels:

1. The first is a limited form. Hashem issues a command yet, man is still able to defy it. As our soul is "a part of Hashem", our innate desire is to fulfil his will.

*"A Jew is neither willing, nor able to tear himself away from Hashem." – Rabbi Schneur Zalman*

From this we understand that our true desire is to do good based on the word of Hashem and therefore our choice in this first instance is whether to suppress or express our innate will.

Up until the episode of the spies this was the only free choice offered to the Jewish people. Hashem provided guidelines and the Jewish people chose to obey or disobey. But disobeying would have gone against their innate instincts.

The second started from the episode of the spies.

2. Hashem replied to Moses saying "Send them as dictated by your understanding. I am not telling you what to do. Do as you see fit." Here, Hashem opened a deeper dimension of free choice in which he imparted greater intrinsic significance on human actions. However, with greater choice comes greater risks but simultaneously when man succeeds in discovering, without instruction, the optimum manner to actualise divine will, the deed is more valuable and significant.

Freedom is almost the centre piece of Judaism and more than using it to do what we want, we can also use it to be able to become what we want. With our freedom, we are also choosing to become someone by choosing whether we want to do something or not and then plug that into the question, "Who is it that I want to become?"

Daniel Gutmann is in Shevet Na'aleh and is a Madrich on Israel Machane 5777



### The Sin of the Spies

Our *parasha* focuses on the notorious *chet hameraglim* – the Sin of the Spies and concludes with the portion of the *mitzvah* of Tzitzit – the fringes that must be placed upon four-cornered garments. Why are these two portions juxtaposed? What is the connection between their themes?

There is a common catchphrase used in both of these passages. In fact, it would seem like somehow the *mitzvah* of Tzitzit is the antidote to the sin of the spies. The mission of the spies is described (Bamidbar 13:17):

**“And Moses sent them לַתּוֹר – to spy out – the land of Canaan”**

Then, at the root of the *mitzvah* of Tzitzit is written (15:39):

**“And you shall have Tzitzit, that you may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Hashem, and do them; so that you do not – תַּתּוֹר – go about after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you go astray”-**

Thus, somehow the *mitzvah* of Tzitzit causes us to remember all the *mitzvot* and thereby not to *לתור*. How do the mechanics of this work? What is the profound meaning of *לתור*? What is at the root of the sin of the spies?

Regarding the *mitzvah* of Tzitzit, Sefer Hachinuch writes (386):

**“I feel that there is a reminder here that the entirety of a person – body and soul – should be completely devoted to Hashem.”-**

A person’s clothing is the means by which their body interacts with the outside world. It at once covers and reveals, and is thus a unique projection of the person’s self-perception. As Jews we fuse this physical appearance with spirituality, allowing for a godly *mitzvah* to “peek-out” through the physical garment (the Hebrew word Tzitzit literally means to peek-out). By enrobing ourselves in this *mitzvah*-garment we envelope ourselves with godliness, thus it represents how our entirety – body and soul – is devoted to Hashem.

Godliness is not something we can pop-in and pop-out of. It is not something we casually do. Granted, we can be inspired by individual practices or moments in Jewish life, but to really love Judaism and Godliness we must be constantly immersed in it. Jewish life is a holistic system that allows Godliness to be expressed over all elements of life.

From the onset, the *meraglim* went into Israel in order to come back. They didn’t have the intention of embracing Israel as their own and make it their home.

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### The Week that Was...

- On Tuesday, 13th June we hosted a Leil Iyun, on Religious Zionism, it started with special guest speaker Miraim Peretz who spoke about her experiences of losing two of her sons who were fighting for Israel and how she has used that experience to inspire people around the world, followed by a bogrim lead panel on what Religious Zionism means to you, we have recorded both these session, if you would like to view them visit our facebook page.

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Instead of tackling the challenges that living in Israel would present to them, they shied-away from them. When a subject is not our own, we need not struggle with it; we can benefit from it haphazardly and then leave it when it becomes inconvenient.

This was the approach of the *meraglim* vis-à-vis Israel; they went as tourists (which curiously sounds very similar to *לתור*), never opening themselves to become immersed in the land and making it their own. Even the fruits they brought to demonstrate to the nation were just put on display, and never eaten. It is not the negative report that was the root of the spies’ sin, they were simply reporting what Moshe had told them to. The root of the sin was their attitude: From the onset they went *לתור* – to be tourists, to go and come back and not struggle to make Israel their own.

Israel is something we sometimes struggle with; it may represent cultures different to those we’re used to, and a language we don’t speak (but certainly should learn!). It is easy to go and come back. Ultimately, the reversal of the sin of the spies and the eternal crying we suffer as a consequence of it (Ta’anit 29a) will come by being inspired by the Tzitzit to be completely embraced by Godliness. Instead of going to Israel to come back, we should allow ourselves to be embraced by it; to go to struggle and stay and make it our own – to make it home.