



Carnegie Shul Chatter

June 15, 2023



Shabbat Services

Join us in the sanctuary, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19, or attend virtually. Watch your email for a Zoom link or contact Rosalyn Hoffman at rjlynman@yahoo.com. The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found at https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2495752/jewish/Shelach-Torah-Reading.htm

Have Faith

Chapter 14, Verse 3, of this week's parshah says, "Why does the Lord bring us to this land to fall by the sword; our wives and children will be as spoils. Is it not better for us to return to Egypt?"

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Last week it was the manna from heaven that had the Children of Israel complaining. This week it is the report of the spies, an inaccurate report at that.

Sometimes it all comes down to faith, doesn't it?

When things do not go our way, it is easy to complain and bemoan our fate.

But why not change that word "fate" to "faith" and have faith that Hashem knows what he is doing and that things will work out the way that God intends for them to work out if we just give Him a chance to do what he deems has to be done.

Hashem's plan is not just for this one moment in time. It is not just for you or me at this moment of time. It is for the longest of times and it is for all of mankind. Have faith. Hashem knows what He is doing and all will turn out for the best if we just have faith and do what Hashem has asked us to do.

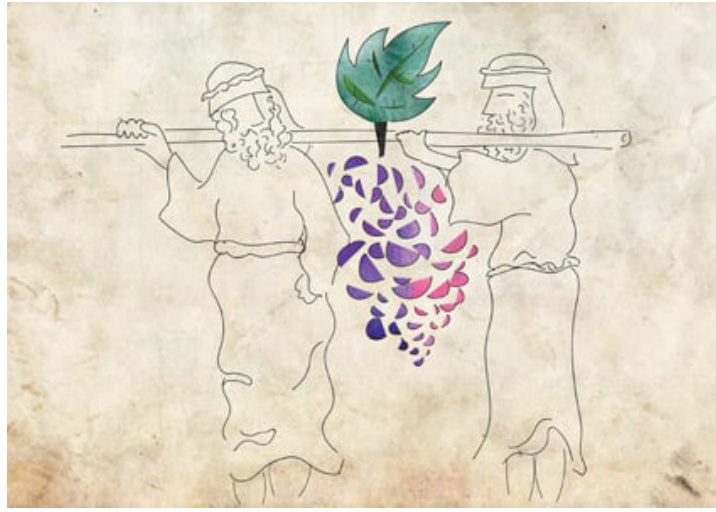
Shelach in a Nutshell

From Chabad.org

Numbers 13:1–15:41

The name of the Parshah, “Shelach,” means “Send.”

Moses sends twelve spies to the land of Canaan. Forty days later they return, carrying a huge cluster of grapes, a pomegranate and a fig, to report on a lush and bountiful land. But ten of the spies warn that the inhabitants of the land are giants and warriors “more powerful than we”; only Caleb and Joshua insist that the land can be conquered, as G-d has commanded.



The people weep that they’d rather return to Egypt. G-d decrees that Israel’s entry into the land shall be delayed forty years, during which time that entire generation will die out in the desert. A group of remorseful Jews storm the mountain on the border of the land, and are routed by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

The laws of the nesachim (meal, wine and oil offerings) are given, as well as the mitzvah to consecrate a portion of the dough (challah) to G-d when making bread. A man violates the Shabbat by gathering sticks, and is put to death. G-d instructs to place fringes (tzitzit) on the four corners of our garments, so that we should remember to fulfill the mitzvot (divine commandments).

Haftorah in a Nutshell

Joshua 2:1-24

This week’s haftorah tells the story of the spies that Joshua sent to scout the city of Jericho, prior to the Israelites’ invasion of the Holy Land, a point in common with this week’s Torah reading, which discusses the twelve spies that were sent by Moses years earlier to explore the Holy Land.

Joshua sent two spies to Jericho, where they lodged at an inn located in the city’s walls, operated by a woman named Rahab. Their presence was quickly discovered by the king who sent for Rahab and asked her to turn in her guests. Rahab responded that her guests had already left the city — when actually she had hidden them on her rooftop.

“And she said to the men, I know that G-d has given you the land, and that your terror has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away because of you.

For we have heard how G-d dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt; and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you completely destroyed.”

At Rahab’s request, the two spies assured her that she and her family would not be harmed during the conquer of Jericho—provided that she would tie a scarlet thread and hang it from her window. This would be a symbol that this home is a safe haven. Rahab helped the men escape via a rope she lowered from her window and told them how to hide from possible pursuers. The spies escaped safely and returned to report to Joshua.

Haftorah Commentary

A couple of weeks ago, in Shul, I gave a D’var Torah about some of the great women of the Bible including, Zelponith, the mother of Samson. This week’s haftorah also includes a woman whose contributions to our Jewish history is often overlooked, as we tend to discuss the story of the spies who were sent to scout the Promised Land when we study parshah Shelach.

Here, from JWA.org is a commentary concerning the heroine of this week’s haftorah, Rahab.

Rahab: Bible

by Tikva Frymer-Kensky, updated by Carol Meyers

June 23, 2021

In Brief

Before the Israelites cross the Jordan, Joshua sends men to scout out the land. Arriving in Jericho, they decide to spend the night at the house of the prostitute Rahab. When Jericho’s ruler tries to apprehend them, Rahab hides them and then helps them escape through the window, thus saving their lives. In return, she and her household are spared the destruction of Jericho and become part of the people Israel. Using the window gives a positive spin to a biblical window motif that casts a negative light on other biblical women. In saving the spies, Rahab she acts as head of her household. She also functions as a prophetic voice anticipating Israel’s occupation of

Rahab Saves the Spies and Saves Her Family

A Canaanite woman living in Jericho, Rahab is a prostitute who is also a biblical heroine. According to the narrative in Joshua 2, before the conquest of Canaan, Joshua sends two men as spies to see the land. They come to Rahab’s house for lodging, information, and/or sex. The king, hearing about the two men, demands that Rahab give them up. Like the midwives in Egypt, Rahab is faced with a “moment of truth.” Like them, Rahab defies the ruler and rescues the Israelites. She tells the king’s men that the two men have left and that the king’s men should chase them. Meanwhile, she has hidden the men under the flax drying on her roof (2:4); the writer uses the unusual word *tizpeno*, “she hid him” (even though there are two men), perhaps as an allusion to Exod 2:2, where Moses’s mother hides her newborn (*tizpenehu*). Rahab is midwife and mother to Israel in its beginnings in Canaan.

Rahab lets the two men out through her window, which is in the town wall. She requests a return for her act of *hesed* (NJPS, “I have shown loyalty”). She asks that she and her family be spared once the Israelites attack Jericho. The spies give her a crimson thread to hang from her window, with the injunction that she is to gather her family and wait inside her house; as



long as they stay indoors, they will be spared. When the Israelites destroy Jericho, as described in Joshua, Rahab and her whole extended family indeed escape doom by waiting inside a house marked with a red thread, just as the Israelites who stayed in houses marked with the blood of the paschal lamb were spared the fate of the Egyptians. They are exempted from the *herem*, Israel’s obligation to destroy all Canaanites (see 6:17), and are brought out of the city to live among the Israelites (6:25). Rahab and her family are a new Israel.

Rahab and the Window

The word for “window” appears three times in the Rahab narrative (Josh 2: 15, 18, 21) when she helps the men escape and marks her house so it will be spared destruction. Windows have a prominent role in the stories of several other biblical women: Michal (2 Sam 6:16), the mother of Sisera (Judg 5:28–31), and Jezebel (2 Kgs 9:30). All these women are looking through their palace windows, separated from the scenes they witness or hope to witness. The window motif accentuates the aloofness of these elite women, who are removed from the real world outside the window. In contrast, Rahab is an active and involved user of the window, which becomes a vehicle of her communication with and connection to the outside world.

Rahab’s Social and Prophetic Role

Rahab is the head of her household, which was not only a dwelling but also a social unit. The extended family in her household consists of her parents, siblings, and “all who belong” to her parents and siblings (2:13, cf. 2:18; 6:22–23), presumably nieces and nephews and possibly servants. The household was the most numerous unit of society in ancient Israel. As such, it was the foundational building block of the sociopolitical structure. When Rahab and her family survive the conquest of Jericho, they thereby become part of the nation Israel, a system of tribes not city states (like Jericho). Her household as the site of female authority (cf. the household of the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4) is incorporated into the new sociopolitical order.

Rahab has a special function in the biblical narratives of Israel’s existence in the land. When uncovering the men, she explains that she knows that God will give Israel the land (2:8). She has heard about the events of the Sea of Reeds (Red Sea) and the defeat of the Amorite kings Og and Sihon, and she declares (quoting from the Song of Miriam in Exodus 15; see v. 11) that “dread” has fallen on the inhabitants and that they all “fear” Israel (2:9). This is the message that the men bring back to Joshua. Rahab is thus the oracle, or prophet, of Israel’s occupation

of the land. Another woman, the prophet Deborah, announced a major victory in the taking of Canaan; and the end of Israel's occupation of the land is pronounced by yet another woman, the prophet Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14–21). Rahab, who begins as triply marginalized—Canaanite, woman, and prostitute—moves to the center as bearer of a divine message and herald of Israel in its new land. Even though later generations of readers have been squeamish about her occupation, preferring to think of her as an “innkeeper,” she is remembered in Jewish tradition as the great proselyte, as ancestress of kings and prophets, and, in the New Testament, as ancestress of Jesus (Matt 1:5).

The Carnegie Shul mourns member Paul Ostfield

OSTFIELD: Paul C. Ostfield, age 90, passed away on May 30. He was a lifelong resident of Pittsburgh, having grown up in Oakland and attending Schenley High School and the University of Pittsburgh, where he was a member of the Pi Lambda Phi fraternity. Paul was also a proud veteran of the United States Navy and lifelong Steelers fan. Paul will always be remembered for his sense of humor, contagious smile and his knack for sharing great jokes to greet family and friends. Paul is preceded in death by his beloved wife of 40 years, Eileen, his siblings Howard Ostfield and Roselie Denny, and his parents Mildred and Joseph Ostfield. He is survived by his daughters Sheryl and Dana (Lyle), his cherished grandchildren Blake and Devyn, as well as numerous nieces and nephews in the Ostfield, Srolovitz, Vesely and Pincus families. Paul also leaves behind lifelong friends and Grouse Drive neighbors who were like family to him. Graveside service and interment will be held on Sunday at 2 p.m. at B'nai Israel Cemetery. To honor Paul's memory, donations can be made to Jewish War Veterans of the United States at jwv.org or by planting a tree in Israel at shiva.com.

Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

Morris J. Mayer

Max Landau

Rose Kimmelman

Bertha Dorn

Fannie Roth

Esther Fogel

May their memories be for a blessing.