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SHABBAT SH'LACH L'CHA

Parashat Sh'lach-L'cha 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.

א וַתִּשָּׂא כָּל־הָעֵדָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ הָעָם בְּלִילָה הַהוּא׃
ב וַיִּלְנוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם
כָּל־הָעֵדָה לוֹ־מִתְּנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לוֹ־מִתְּנוּ׃
ג וְלָמָּה יְהוָה מְבִיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְנַפֵּל בַּחֲרֵב נַשִּׁינוּ
וְטַפָּנוּ יְהִיוּ לְבָז הַלֹּז טוֹב לָנוּ שׁוּב מִצְרַיִמָּה׃ ד וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ
אֶל־אָחִיו נִתְּנָה רֹאשׁ וַיִּנְשׁוּבָה מִצְרַיִמָּה׃ ה וַיִּפֹּל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן
עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם לִפְנֵי כָּל־קְהַל עֵדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃ ו וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נוּן וְכָלֵב
בֶּן־יִפְתָּה מִן־הַתְּרִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ קָרְעוּ בְּגָדֵיהֶם׃ ז וַיֹּאמְרוּ
אֶל־כָּל־עֵדֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבְרָנוּ בָּהּ לְתוֹר
אֲתָה טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד׃ [שלישי] ח אַס־חַפֵּץ בָּנוּ יְהוָה
וְהֵבִיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיִּתְּנָה לָנוּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הוּא זָבֵת
חֶלֶב וּדְבָשׁ׃ ט אַךְ בִּיהוָה אֶל־תִּמְרְדוּ וְאַתֶּם אֶל־תִּירְאוּ אֶת־עַם
הָאָרֶץ כִּי לַחֲמֵנוּ הֵם סָר צַלָּם מֵעֲלֵיהֶם וַיְהוּה אֹתָנוּ אֶל־תִּירָאִם׃
י וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעֵדָה לְרָגוּם אַתֶּם בְּאַבְנִים וַיִּכְבֹּד יְהוָה נְרָאָה
בְּאַהֲל מוֹעֵד אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

NUMBERS 14:1-10

The whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night. **2** All the Israelites railed against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in the land of Egypt," the whole community shouted at them, "or if only we might die in this wilderness! **3** Why is Adonai taking us to that land to fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be carried off! It would be better for us to go back to Egypt!" **4** And they said to one another, "Let us head back for Egypt." **5** Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembled congregation of Israelites. **6** And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, of those who had scouted the land, rent their clothes **7** and exhorted the whole Israelite community: "The land that we traversed and scouted is an exceedingly good land. **8** If pleased with us, Adonai will bring us into that land, a land that flows with milk and honey, and give it to us; **9** only you must not rebel against Adonai. Have no fear then of the people of the country, for they are our prey their protection has departed from them, but Adonai is with us. Have no fear of them!" **10** As the whole community threatened to pelt them with stones, the Presence of Adonai appeared in the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites.

ZECHARIAH 8:3-12

3. So said God: I will return to Zion, and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth, and the mount of the Eternal One of Hosts [shall be called] the holy mountain. 4. So said the Eternal One of Hosts: Old men and women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of old age. 5. And the streets of the city shall be filled, with boys and girls playing in its streets. 6. So said the Eternal One of Hosts: As it will be wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, it will also be wonderful in My eyes, says the Eternal One. 7. So said the Eternal One of Hosts: Behold I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west. 8. And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I shall be their God, in truth and in righteousness. 9. So said the Eternal One of Hosts: Let your hands be strong, you who hear in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets that were [prophesying] in the day that the foundation of the house of the Eternal One of Hosts was laid, even the Temple, that it might be built. 10. For before those days, there was no hire for man; neither was there any hire for beast. And for him that went out or came in, there was no peace because of the adversary, and I would incite all men, each one against his neighbour. 11. But now I am not [the same] to the remnant of this people as in the early days, said the Eternal One of Hosts. 12. For the sowing is for peace. The vine shall give forth its fruit, and the earth shall give forth its produce, and the heavens shall give forth their dew-and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these.