

If this parashah were a film, its opening verses would be accompanied by ominous music rising to a crescendo on that little word *lecha* (for yourself). When HaShem tells Abraham *lech lecha* (go for yourself), it is an invitation to go and learn about his calling. The fact that Abraham heeds the call attests to his intrinsic trust. However, when HaShem tells Moses *shelach lecha* (send for yourself), it is an admission of failure. Time and again the people have shown an appalling lack of trust, and this is a last ditch attempt to instill in them the confidence they need to settle the land HaShem promised to Abraham's progeny. It is noteworthy that this episode immediately follows the story of Miriam's *lashon hara* in last week's parashah. Midrash Tanchuma explains: "What is the reason for saying, 'Send men,' after the episode of Miriam? It is simply that it was anticipated by the Holy One of Blessing that they would come and utter evil speech against the land. ... They should not be able to say, 'We did not know the penalty for evil speech.' ... It was a warning that if they came to speak slander, they would consider what happened to Miriam, but even so, they did not desire to learn." Indeed, they were remarkably resistant to learning the responsibilities of freedom, which begins with understanding the difference between blind faith and the trust they should have gained through experiencing how HaShem has provided for them thus far. The word *emunah* does not imply blind faith, which, according to Proverbs 14:15, is only held by fools. Correctly understood, *emunah* is the cornerstone of our religious practice. Its root אמן forms words such as loyalty, support, perseverance, and *amen*, that ubiquitous affirmation used by adherents of all three Abrahamic religions. Of course there is an element of belief involved, but according to Prof. Menachem Kellner, there are two kinds of belief: belief **in**, and belief **that**. The former is integral to the more dogmatic traditions, which require their members to profess certain doctrines. The latter is informed by our covenantal relationship with HaShem, in which we uphold our human side by honoring the mitzvot, and in turn trust that HaShem will uphold the Divine side. That's *emunah* – a deep conviction that we live in an eternal, reciprocal relationship with HaShem. But because all but two of the people who left Egypt with Moses sorely lack the ability to understand what reciprocity entails, they will not enter the Promised Land. What made Joshua and Caleb so different, not only from the rest of their tribal chieftain colleagues, but also from each other? We first met Joshua back in Parashah Beshalach, when Moses chose him to pick men to fight against Amalek. Moses calls him again in our parashah, in a verse with a puzzling discrepancy that Babylonian Talmud Tractate Sotah cites to explain why Joshua did not join Caleb in silencing the scouts: "[referencing 13:22: he rather than they came to Hebron] teaches that Caleb separated himself from the counsel of the other spies and went and prostrated himself on the graves of the forefathers in Hebron. He said to them, 'My forefathers, pray for mercy for me so that I will be saved from the counsel of the spies.' ... Joshua did not go to the graves of the forefathers because Moses had already prayed for mercy for him, as it is stated: 'and Moses called Hoshea son of Nun Yehoshua' [Joshua] meaning God will save you [*yah yoshiakha*] from the counsel of the spies. And this is the meaning of 'But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and has followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land where into he went,' which implies that Caleb changed his mind over time. Joshua, however, was opposed to the intentions of the other spies from the outset." Joshua has been Moses' assistant and heir apparent at least since that dreadful day at the place Moses named Massah (testing) and Merivah (quarreling) in the wake of the Israelites' violent reaction to the lack of water. His path is vastly different from Caleb's, whose leadership is confined to his own tribe of Judah. Both men are aware of their fellow scouts' misgivings, but when their negative report begins to arouse dissent, it is Caleb who rushes in to silence them, while Joshua remains in the background and does not step in until the people become violent and threaten to appoint a leader to guide them back to Egypt. Joshua is neither a coward, nor does he momentarily succumb to the scouts' negativity. He is behaving with proper deference toward his mentor and leader. But the talk of giving up and returning to Egypt, in essence a rejection of the First Commandment, overrides his feelings of propriety and he joins Caleb's attempt to convince the people to persevere. Later, in the Book of Joshua when the lands are being apportioned Caleb reminds Joshua of this episode and Joshua honors his request to receive Hebron for himself and his tribe. (Joshua 14:6-15) There are many stories about Caleb. His father was a Kenizzite, a Canaanite tribe that was likely absorbed into the tribe of Judah before they emigrated to Egypt, and rabbinic literature usually portrays him as the husband of Miriam and the father of Hur (who was the grandfather of Betzalel). According to the above verses in Joshua, he was 40 when he left Egypt, and since Moses was 80 and Miriam was his older sister, that is a huge age difference. But in our sacred literature age is irrelevant, time is not always linear, and because people and their names are sometimes conflated, there even may have been two men named Caleb. But as we know, the message is more important than the details. What stands out here is how Caleb (*ka-lev / kol-lev*: wholehearted) as his name implies, models true *emunah* by remaining loyal and persistent, speaking truth from his heart and encouraging the people to trust that if they do their part in settling the land, HaShem will be with them.

Shabbat shalom!