

Shelach- Lekhah

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Shabbat- shalom. This week's Torah portion is *Shelach- Lekhah*. In my Torah portion the Lord commanded Moses to send spies into the land of Canaan, seeing if the land was suitable for the Jewish people to settle. The spies found lots of fruit and fertile soil, but feared the burly men of Canaan were too strong to conquer. The whole community was devastated, crying with despair, wishing they had died in Egypt. The Israelites had no faith in the Lord, even though He had saved them. The Lord was furious with the Israelites for not showing faith in Him, and was willing to let them die of disease. But Moses convinced him otherwise, saying it would appear He had taken the people out of Egypt to let them suffer and die in the wilderness. Moses convinced the Lord to give them another chance.

I can relate to quitting like the Israelites did in my Torah portion. I went to my final championship soccer game and it was only the first few moments of the game and already my team was losing by two points. I was devastated and had lost all confidence, fearing I was about to lose my one opportunity to win the league championship. In my Torah portion the Israelites gave up, believing there was no way they could defeat the strong men of Canaan. But I soon came to realize the game was not over. As the game continued I scored one point, then another, until finally we were tied. With only a few moments left I scored the winning goal, helping my team win the final championship game! I should have told myself in the beginning of the game that there is still a chance of my team winning. The Israelites should have maintained their faith in the Lord. If only they had maintained their faith in G-d all the Israelites could have entered the Promised Land. As a consequence for losing faith in the Lord anyone over the age of 20 did not enter the Promised Land, only those younger than 20. All the scouts except Joshua were killed by plague for causing the whole community to fear the land of Canaan and not believe in the Lord.

For my mitzvah project I played my flute at Summerwood, a community for senior citizens. With the help of my Grandfather I put together a show about American

history which included a dialogue about milestones in United States history and songs to accompany it. It felt good knowing I was bringing happiness to some senior citizens by doing what I do best, play the flute. I am sure this performance brought some excitement and joy into their lives, and I was so glad to see smiles on their faces! My Torah portion is about facing difficulties with faith and courage. I hope by bringing joy into these people's lives I have helped them to have the faith and courage to face the difficulties of old age.

I would like to thank the people who have prepared me for this special day. First I would like to thank Cantor Cohn for teaching me my Torah portions, Haftarah, and the service. Next I would also like to thank Rabbi Lazowski and Rabbi Small for their guidance, Education Director, Judith Fox for her assistance in preparing my *D'var Torah*, and the Emanuel Religious School for preparing me for this special day. Most importantly I would like to thank my parents for always encouraging and supporting me. Last but not least I would like to thank everyone for being here with me on this special occasion