

## PARSHAT SHELACH: IS HOPE IRRATIONAL?

### TEACHER'S GUIDE



#### POINTS TO PAUSE



#### DISCUSSION TOPICS

- 0:40

Which do you think is more rational: hope or hopelessness? Optimism or pessimism? Which approach makes more sense?
- 3:02

Why do they keep mentioning Egypt? Granted, they are terribly frustrated to have been schlepped through the desert only to find out that they'll be destroyed in Israel (according to the report); still, was Egypt really better? Don't they remember the terrible subjugation and torture that they endured in Egypt? How could they *ever* entertain the possibility of returning there?
- 4:34

Those who prefer hopelessness look at those who are hopeful as unrealistic and imaginative. But isn't looking to Egypt as a better alternative also imaginative? Haven't they reimagined their time there? If so, what's the real difference between hope and hopelessness?



#### FROM PRINCIPLE TO PRACTICE

Rabbi Fohrman suggested that hopefulness through proper imagination – imagination of the future instead of the past – is actually something that we can all practice. Do you agree? If so, *how* can we train ourselves to be hopeful, to be effectively imaginative of the future?

Think of examples in your own lives and consider the two possible perspectives described in the video. Which is easier to adopt? Which feels better? Practically, what can we do to adopt a default of hopefulness?

Source Sheet/Graphic Organizer  
**SHELACH: IS HOPE IRRATIONAL?**

**NUMBERS 14**

- א** וַתִּשָּׂא, כָּל-הָעֵדָה, וַיִּתְּנוּ, אֶת-קוֹלָם; וַיִּבְכוּ הָעָם, בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא.
- ב** וַיִּלְנוּ עַל-מֹשֶׁה וְעַל-אַהֲרֹן, כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם כָּל-הָעֵדָה, לוֹ-מִתְּנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, אוֹ בַמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה, לוֹ-מָתוּנוּ.
- ג** וְלָמָּה יְהוָה מְבִיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת, לְנַפֵּל בַּחֶרֶב--נָשִׁינוּ וְטַפֵּנוּ, יִהְיוּ לְבָז; הֲלוֹא טוֹב לָנוּ, שׁוּב מִצְרַיִם.
- ד** וַיֹּאמְרוּ, אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו: נַתְּנָה רֹאשׁ, וְנִשׁוּבָה מִצְרַיִם.
- 1** And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.
- 2** And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole congregation said unto them: 'Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would we had died in this wilderness!
- 3** And wherefore doth the LORD bring us unto this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey; were it not better for us to return into Egypt?'
- 4** And they said one to another: 'Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.'



*Instructions:* As the video progresses, fill in the different roles that "Egypt" plays in the above verses. How central a role does Egypt play in the Jews' complaints in each successive verse?

**Egypt: Role 1**

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**Egypt: Role 2**

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**Egypt: Role 3**

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