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# Where Will the Current Take You?

Yoela Zimberoff '16 | Bronfman Torah | Shelach Lecha 2017

***Yoela Zimberoff** (Bronfman '16) is a recent graduate from University Prep in Seattle, Washington. Next year she is headed to Israel where she will farm, bringing her love of nature with her.*

I once wrote a poem about math to prove to my calculus teacher that sigma notation was not the true “Poetry of Math.” Notations are rigid, poetry flows.

When I graduated elementary school, I cried because I didn’t want to grow up. I wanted to stay in the comforts of the three floors where I had spent the last six years of my life.

I cried again when graduating eighth grade, afraid that high school would not match my nostalgic childhood. I didn’t have a choice; I had to braved the new grade nonetheless. There was a rigid formula set for my future, so tears aside, high school was inevitable.

Last week I graduated from high school. Something had shifted in the four years since middle school commencement. I was more than ready to graduate, and all my attachments to the past were lost in my excitement to move on.

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This shift took place over time. The first three years of high school held me in a sigma prison of n's and k's, forcing me to paddle stoically through society's expectations.

Math is not easy for me.

I'm more into poetry.

The future is uncertain and terrifying. I felt this acutely in fifth and eighth grade. Fear can make you cautious but it can also hold you back.

Leaving twelfth grade, there is a blinding light illuminating the stage, and any uncertainty I have for the future is too busy shielding its eyes to interfere with me.

Is this unsure optimism the vibration under Parshat Shelach? In this week's Torah portion, God commands Moses to send spies into The Promised Land, Canaan. After traveling from Egypt through the desert, the Jewish people are about to settle in their new home.

Twelve men set out to spy on the land and its inhabitants. All but two of the spying team return with terrified reports of the tremendous people in Canaan. Fear spreads like fire among the Jews. In response, the children of Israel decide (not for the first time) that Egypt is a better alternative to a gruesome fate at the hand of Canaan's "giants."

God does not take kindly to the pessimists who would rather turn around than embrace the challenge of conquering new land. God kills them and leaves only the two optimistic spies alive. Only those who maintain faith in God are left. They are left to rely on an optimistic promise from God to take them through the stage light of the future to a better home.

It is a giddy freedom, I have found, to accept the uncertainty that tomorrow brings.  
Stop unexpectedly in the middle of nowhere.  
Laugh unintentionally.  
Adventure.

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Anti-routine.  
Embrace a new home,  
A new future.

I am so excited to make mistakes and discover new places and ideas in the coming years. I am psyched to read more poetry into my life with the optimism of the two positive spies. I'm ready to feel the wind blow and let it catch my sails and take me away. New things are coming.

The Jewish people were caught in a developmental stage in Parshat Shelach. They were torn between pessimism and optimism, and they needed a push from God to help them move into uncertainty.

Where will the current take you?

Are you willing to find out?

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**Continue the conversation. Send Yoela your thoughts: [yoelaz.h@gmail.com](mailto:yoelaz.h@gmail.com).**

***P.S.: We're always looking for more dvar torah writers. Interested? Contact [stefanie@byfi.org](mailto:stefanie@byfi.org). We look forward to hearing from you.***



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