

Studies in Bamidbar: The Sin of the Spies and Selective Perception

Source 1: End of Shlach, Bamidbar 15

- 37 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying:
 לז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר.
- 38 'Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them throughout their generations fringes in the corners of their garments, and that they put with the fringe of each corner a thread of blue.
 לח דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם, וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל-כַּנְּפֵי בְּגָדֵיהֶם, לְדֶרְתָּם; וּנְתַנּוּ עַל-צִיצִית הַכַּנָּף, פִּתְּיֵל תְּכֵלֶת.
- 39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go astray;
 לט וְהָיָה לָכֶם, לְצִיצִית, וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה, וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם; וְלֹא-תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶם, וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם, אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם זֹנִים, אַחֲרֵיהֶם.
- 40 that ye may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy unto your God.
 מ לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ, וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתַי; וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים, לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם.
- 41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.' {P}
 מא אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, לִהְיוֹת לָכֶם, לֵאלֹהִים: אֲנִי, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. {פ}

Source 2: Sifri

ר' מאיר אומר וראיתם אותם לא נאמר אלא וראיתם אותו מגיד הכתוב שכל המקיים מצות ציצית מעלים עליו כאלו הקביל פני שכינה שהתכלת דומה לים וים דומה לרקיע ורקיע דומה לכסא הכבוד שנאמר ([יחזקאל א](#).) 'וממעל לרקיע אשר על ראשם.

Rabbi Meir said: It does not say “And you shall see them” – but “you shall see it (Him)” – the Torah is teaching us that whomever observes the mitzva of tsitsit, is considered as if he greeted the Divine Presence, for tekhelet resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the sky, and the sky resembles God's holy throne."

Source 3: From scienc.nasa.gov

If someone were to ask you what is the color of the ocean, chances are that you would answer that it was blue. For most of the world's oceans, your answer would be correct. Pure water is perfectly clear, of course -- but if there is a lot of water, and the water is very deep so that there are no reflections off the sea floor, the water appears as a very dark navy blue. The reason the ocean is blue is due to the absorption and scattering of light. The blue wavelengths of light are scattered, similar to the scattering of blue light in the sky but absorption is a much larger factor than scattering for the clear ocean water. In water, absorption is strong in the red and weak in the blue, thus red light is absorbed quickly in the ocean leaving blue. Almost all sunlight that enters the ocean is absorbed, except very close to the coast. The red, yellow, and green wavelengths of sunlight are absorbed by water molecules in the ocean. When sunlight hits the ocean, some of the light is reflected back directly but most of it penetrates the ocean surface and interacts with the water molecules that it encounters. The red, orange, yellow, and green wavelengths of light are absorbed so that the remaining light we see is composed of the shorter wavelength blues and violets.

If there are any particles suspended in the water, they will increase the scattering of light. In coastal areas, runoff from rivers, resuspension of sand and silt from the bottom by tides, waves and storms and a number of other substances can change the color of the near-shore waters. Some types of particles (in particular, the cells of phytoplankton, also referred to as algae) can also contain substances that absorb certain wavelengths of light, which alters its characteristics.

Source 4: Royal Museums – Greenwich

Why is the sky blue (short answer)?

- As white light passes through our atmosphere, tiny air molecules cause it to 'scatter'.
- The scattering caused by these tiny air molecules (known as Rayleigh scattering) increases as the wavelength of light decreases.
- Violet and blue light have the shortest wavelengths and red light has the longest.
- Therefore, blue light is scattered more than red light and the sky appears blue during the day.
- When the Sun is low in the sky during sunrise and sunset the light has to travel further through the Earth's atmosphere.
- We don't see the blue light because it gets scattered away, but the red light isn't scattered very much so the sky appears red.

Source 5: Bamidbar Ch. 13 – Parshat Shlach

כֹּה וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ מִמִּדְבַּר־צֶן עַד־רְחֹב לְבֵּא חַמַּת: כִּי וַיַּעֲלוּ בְּנֵי־בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־חֲבֵרוֹן וְשֵׁם אַחִימָן וְשֵׁם שֶׁשַׁי וְתַלְמִי יְלִידֵי הָעֵנָק וְחֲבֵרוֹן שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים נִבְנְתָה לְפָנַי צֶעַן מִצְרַיִם: כִּי וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־נַחַל אֶשְׁכּוֹל וַיִּכְרְתוּ מִשָּׁם זְמוּרָה וְאֶשְׁכּוֹל עֲנָבִים אֶחָד וַיִּשְׂאֶהוּ בְמוֹט בְּשָׁנִים וּמִן־הָרְמָנִים וּמִן־הַתְּאֵנִים:

13:21 The men headed north and explored the land, from the Tzin Desert all the way to Rechov on the road to Chamath.

13:22 **On the way through the Negev, they came to Hebron** where [they saw] Achiman, Sheshai and Talmi, descendants of the Giant. Hebron had been built seven years before Tzoan in Egypt.

13:23 When they came to Cluster Valley (*Nachal Eshkol*), they cut a branch and a cluster of grapes, which two men carried on a frame.

Source 6: Rashi

ויבא עד חברון. כָּלֵב לְבָדוּ הֶלֶךְ שָׁם וְנִשְׁתַּטַּח עַל קְבְרֵי אָבוֹת שְׁלֵא יְהֵא נִסַּת לְחַבְרָיו לְהִיּוֹת בְּעֶצְתָם, וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר) **דברים א**, (!וְלוֹ אֶתְּן אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר דָּרַךְ בָּהּ", וְכֹתִיב) **שופטים א** ("וַיִּתְּנוּ לְכָלֵב אֶת חֲבֵרוֹן) "**סוטה ל"ד** :

ויבא עד חברון [AND THEY WENT UP BY THE SOUTH] AND HE CAME UNTO HEBRON — Caleb alone went there and prostrated himself on the graves of the Patriarchs, offering prayer that he might be helped not to give way to the enticement of his colleagues and join them in their counsel. You may see that it was Caleb who went there, for so indeed it (Scripture) states, ([Deuteronomy 1:36](#)) “[Save Caleb the son of Jephunnch, he shall see it] and unto him will I give the land upon which he hath trodden!” and it is written, ([Judges 1:20](#)) “And they gave Hebron unto Caleb” ([Sotah 34b](#))

Source 7: Rashbam

ויבא עד חברון - הגדה נראית פשוט: שעל כלב אמר הכתוב שנאמר: ולו אתן את הארץ אשר דרך בה והביאותיו אל הארץ אשר בא שמה וזרעו יורישנה. לפיכך ויבא עד חברון - הוא כלב ונשתטח על קבורת אבות והתפלל שינצל מעצת מרגלים. ומצינו ביהושע שנתן לכלב את חברון, כדכתיב: ואת שדה העיר ואת חצריה נתנו לכלב בן יפנה באחוזתו. ומכל מקום לפי עיקר פשוטו: ויבא כל אחד ואחד עד חברון, שהרי אמרו: וגם בני הענקים ראינו שם בחברון. וכתיב: ושם ראינו את הנפילים בני ענק.

And He came till Hevron- The midrash aggada seems to think that the verse is referring to Calev, as it says, “And I will give to him the city that he tread upon.....” Therefore, “and he came to Hevron” – is a reference to Calev, who prostrated himself on the graves of the patriarchs...nevertheless, the main pshat is that EACH ONE OF THE SPIES reached Hevron, because – after all, they said, “**We also saw the children of the Anakim there**” – ie in Hevron. It also says, “**And that’s where we saw the Nefilim...**”

Source 8: Talmud Sotah 34b

ויעלו בנגב ויבא עד חברון ויבאו מבעי ליה אמר (במדבר יג, כב) רבא מלמד שפירש כלב מעצת מרגלים והלך ונשתטח על קברי אבות אמר להן אבותי בקשו עלי רחמים שאנצל מעצת מרגלים

It is also stated with regard to the spies: “**And they went up into the south, and he came to Hebron**” ([Numbers 13:22](#)). Why is the phrase “and he came” written in the singular form? The verse **should have said: And they came. Rava says: This 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.**

Source 9: Commentary of Shem MishMuel

ובזה יש לפרש מה שאבות נקראו ישני חברון, היינו שלשון חברון מלשון חיבור ויש לומר שנקראת כן בשביל מערת המכפלה שבה הוא תכלית החיבור

Source 10: Rabbeinu Bachaye – commentary on Bereishit

ויתכן לומר עוד בשם קרית ארבע היא חברון היא נקראת חברון על שם שכל הקבור שם נפשו מתחברת למעלה בעיר אלהים עם ד' מחנות שכינה, ולא לחנם חמדוה אבות העולם אלא שמשם זוכות הנשמות להתחבר לשרשן שהוא כסא הכבוד וזהו קרית ארבע היא חברון.

Source 11: Shir HaShirim/Song of Songs – Ch. 2

(ח) קול דודי הנה זה בא מדלג על ההרים מקפיץ על הגבעות:
 (ט) דומה דודי לצבי או לעפר האילים הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו
משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן החרכים:

8. The sound of my beloved! Behold, he is coming, skipping over the mountains, jumping over the hills.
9. My beloved resembles a gazelle or a fawn of the hinds; behold, he is standing behind our wall, **looking from the windows, peering from the lattices.**

Source 12: Sefat Emet, Shlach

ועשו להם ציצית כו' והי' לכם לציצית. ציצית - הסתכלות - כמ"ש במד' מציץ מן החרכים. שורש הענין שנתן השי"ת לבנ"י מצות להאיר הלבוש של האדם רומז אל הגוף מלבוש הנשמה אבל ביצ"מ יצאו בני"י מן ההסגר והמיצר ז"ש עומד אחר כתלנו משגיח כו' מציץ כו'. שצריך איש ישראל להניח מקום ופתח שתאיר הנשמה בגוף.

And make for yourselves Tzizit etc and they will be for you tzizit. Tzizit – gazing, staring – as it says in the midrash, “Peering from the lattices...” The root of this concept is that The Holy One, Blessed be He gave the Jewish people mitzvot to enhance and enlighten their “garments” – **a metaphor for the body, because the body is that garment of the neshama (soul).** With the exodus from Egypt, the Jews left their **confinement and restriction (Mizraim)** – and this is the reference in the verse in Song of Songs, “he is standing behind the wall, looking from the windows, etc” It is incumbent on the Jew to leave room, an opening, for the neshama to enlighten the body...

Source 13: R. Yehuda Landau – Taámei HaMitzvot

The concept of Tzizit involves a “Hatzatzah” and looking...The Torah commanded us to make a sign that would enable us to perceive with our senses and our intellect. That which saves us is the Ptil Techelet – **the blue thread indicates the One on High – who is the Tachlit of all creation, and towards whom all eyes turn.** Our sages said, You should see it hints at Hashem,...and the reason they gave is that the Techelet is similar in color to the sea, which is similar to the heavens, and to the Throne of Glory.

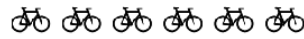
תכלת = תכלית

בציצית שאפילו לא תצטרכו להיות כתייר לבקש דרך לברוח מן היצה"ר כ"א מיד תפרוש ותברח א' וענין הציצית היא הצצה והבטה וציוה שיעשו להם סימן שבו ישקיפו השקפה חושיות ושכליות ואותו דבר המציל היא פתיל תכלת והשקפה שכליות היא במה שירמוז גוון תכלת אל הנמצא עליון שהוא תכלית כל הנמצאים וכל העינים כלות אליו ית'. ואחז"ל וראיתם אוהו ירמוז אל השי"ת שהוא פני השכינה, ונתנו טעם לדבר שהתכלת עינו דומה לים וים דומה לרקיע ורקיע לכסא הכבוד וזהו העיון השכלי העולה במעלות הסולם מהנמצאות

Source 14: Rav Avigdor Nebenzhal – Sichot L'Sefer Bamidbar:

The color connection does not seem to make sense – the world is a mashal/metaphor for something higher!

...רקיע דומה לכסא-הכבוד' - זאת כבר קשה להבין : וכי איזה צבע יש לכסא-הכבוד? נכון שהגמרא (שם) מדייקת מפסוק שצבעו תכלת – אך האם באמת יש לכסא-הכבוד צבע כלשהו? האם שייך בכלל לדבר עליו כעל "כסא" במובנינו-אנו, ולו יהא גדול ורחב ככל שנדמיין? הרי כסא-ה' הוא מושג מופשט לחלוטין, ללא אורך ורוחב, ללא טעם וריח, וודאי גם ללא צבע. אם-כן כיצד ממשילים את כסא-הכבוד, לעצם כלשהו בצבע התכלת?



ובאמת יתכן, שהעולם-הזה כולו, על מושגיו הרבים ומרכיביו האדירים – נברא אך ורק כדי לשמש משל לעולם העליון! לרוחניות, שמהותה האמיתית נסתרת מאתנו, ואין לשכל-אנוש תפיסה בה.

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב שְׁלַח־לְךָ אַנְשִׁים וַיְתַרּוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ כְּנֻעַן אֲשֶׁר־אָנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אֶחָד אִישׁ אֶחָד לַמָּטָה אֲבַתְיוֹ תִשְׁלְחוּ כֹל נָשִׂיא בָהֶם: ... טז אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לְתוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשִׁיעַ בֶּן־נוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: יז וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה לְתוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ כְּנֻעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם עֲלוּ זֶה בַּנֶּגֶב וְעַלִּיתֶם אֶת־הַהָר: יח וּרְאִיתֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ מֵה־הוּא וְאֶת־הָעָם הַיֹּשֵׁב עָלֶיהָ הֲתִזְקַק הוּא הֲרַפָּה הֲמַעֲט הוּא אִם־רַב: יט וְיָמָּה הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ הֲטוֹבָה הוּא אִם־רָעָה וְיָמָּה הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יוֹשֵׁב בָּהֶנָּה הֲבִמְחֻנִים אִם בְּמִבְצָרִים: כ וְיָמָּה הָאָרֶץ הַשְּׂמֹנֶה הוּא אִם־רְזָה הַיִּשְׁבָּה עַל אִם־אֲזִין וְהִתְחַזְּקֶתֶם וּלְקַחְתֶּם מִפְּרֵי הָאָרֶץ וְהַיְמִים יָמִי בַפּוּרִי עֲנֹבִים: כא וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיְתַרּוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ מִמֶּדְבָר־צֹן עַד־רְחֹב לְבָא חֲמַת: כב וַיַּעֲלוּ בַנֶּגֶב וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־חֶבְרוֹן וְשָׁם אַחִימֵן שָׁשִׁי וְתַלְמִי יִלְיָדִי הָעֵנָק וְחֶבְרוֹן שָׁבַע שָׁנִים גְּבֻנָתָהּ לִפְנֵי צִעֵן מִצְרָיִם: כג וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־גֹּחַל אֲשָׁפָל וַיִּכְרְתוּ מִשָּׁם זְמוּרָה וְאֲשָׁפּוֹל עֲנֹבִים אֶחָד וַיִּשְׁאַהוּ בַמּוֹט בַּשָּׁנִים וּמִן־הָרְמָנִים וּמִן־הַתְּאֵנִים: כד לַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא קָרָא גֹחַל אֲשָׁפּוֹל עַל אֲדוֹת הָאֲשָׁפּוֹל אֲשֶׁר־פָּרְתוּ מִשָּׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ מִתּוֹר הָאָרֶץ מִקֶּץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם: לו וַיָּהֶס כָּלֵב אֶת־הָעָם אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר עֲלֶה גַעֲלֶה וַיַּרְשֵׁנוּ אֹתָהּ כִּי־יָכוֹל נוֹכַל לָהּ: לז וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־עָלוּ עִמּוֹ אָמְרוּ לֹא נוֹכַל לַעֲלֹת אֶל־הָעָם כִּי־חַזַק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ: לח וַיִּצְיֵאוּ דַבַּת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תָּרוּ אֹתָהּ אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבְרָנוּ בָּהּ לְתוֹר אֹתָהּ אָרֶץ אֲכָלֹת יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ הוּא וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־רָאִינוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ אַנְשֵׁי מְדוֹת: לט וְשָׁם רָאִינוּ אֶת־הַנְּפִילִים בְּנֵי עֵנָק מִן־הַנְּפִילִים וְנָהִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כַּחֲגָבִים וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְעֵינֵיהֶם:

Source 15: The work of Psychologist Carol Dweck

According to Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, mindset is a simple idea that has a profound effect on a person's life. Mindset,

Dweck says, is the view that you adopt for yourself that determines the way you live your life, see the world, and make decisions.

Another definition of mindset is essentially your particular perspective, or the way you view the world. In short, it's the way your perceptions or your beliefs about your abilities and qualities shape the way you operate.

Think about some of your talents or qualities. Are you creative? Do you have musical abilities? Are you intelligent? Wise?

The way you answered those questions says a lot about your mindset and how you view yourself and the world around you. Your mindset is not a small thing. It's largely responsible for what shapes your reality, shaping your entire perception of what's attainable and what's out of your reach.

Growth vs. Fixed Mindset

Now that you have a firm grasp on the basics of mindset, we can start to break down the difference between a growth and a fixed mindset.

Fixed Mindset

There's substantial debate about what exactly constitutes a fixed mindset, but we can at least nail some of the primary factors. A fixed-mindset essentially means that you believe your attributes and abilities are inherently fixed and unchanging. Most of how you think about yourself in regard to personality, drive, setbacks, and goals grows directly out of your mindset.

It's common for people with a fixed mindset to believe that their general qualities are fixed traits that can't be changed.

For example, you may believe you're only as smart as the fixed amount of intelligence you were born with. In other words, you're as smart as you'll ever be. This may lead to you not working to improve your intelligence, because you don't believe this level can grow with time and experience. Instead, you believe they're *fixed* exactly where they are.

Because of this you may feel an urgency to prove yourself again and again. Why? Because if you only have a certain amount of intelligence, moral character, talent, or success, you need to demonstrate that you have a large amount of each. There is a sense where you need to prove that you're a good person in every area.

Maria Popova helpfully phrases it this way:

A "fixed mindset" assumes that our character, intelligence, and creative ability are static givens which we can't change in any meaningful way, and success is the affirmation of that inherent intelligence, an assessment of how those givens measure up against an equally fixed standard; striving for success and avoiding failure at all costs become a way of maintaining the sense of being smart or skilled.

If you have a fixed mindset, it's easy to get caught in a web of proving to yourself and others that whatever fixed level of talent and skill you have, it's enough. Otherwise, you're stuck with an inadequate amount of whatever it is that you're not going to be able to improve.

If a fixed mindset is left unchecked long enough, it can eventually lead to a failure mindset, in which you believe you simply can't overcome challenges.

Growth Mindset

Now let's talk about the growth mindset. If you have this perspective you tend to see your levels of intelligence, skill, talent, and success as starting at a basic starting level but with the capacity to grow.

You believe that there are numerous stepping stones toward development and improvement. This mindset is founded on the belief that your basic qualities are cultivable and flexible things that can grow with dedication, time, and a commitment to getting better, smarter, and more talented.

If you have a growth mindset, you believe everyone can grow and change through application, exercise, and a lot of hard work.

Consider the intelligence example. If you have a growth mindset, you believe that you're gifted with a certain amount of intelligence, but that you can also constantly improve that base level of intelligence.

This will lead you to study, learn, and put the work into expanding your minds in order to become more intelligent.

Learning to have a growth mindset help create significant motivation and productivity in business, sports, education, relationships, and beyond.

Source 16: Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Covenant and Conversation 5771:

In fact, as we later discover in the book of Joshua, the inhabitants of the land were terrified of the Israelites. When Joshua sent spies to Jericho, Rahab told them “A great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.” When the people heard what G-d had done for the Israelites, “our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you” (Josh. 2:9-11)

The spies should have known this. They themselves had sung at the Red Sea: “The people of Canaan melted away; terror and dread fell upon them” (Ex. 15:15-16).

The spies were guilty of an attribution error, assuming that others felt as they did. They said, “We were like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so we were in their eyes” (Num. 13:33).

....Apply this logic to the spies and we see something fascinating. The Torah describes them in these words: “All were men [of standing]; they were heads of the Israelites” (13: 3). They were people with reputations to guard. Others had high expectations of them. They were princes, leaders, men of renown. If Dweck is right, people laden with expectations tend to be risk-averse. They do not want to be seen to fail. That may be why they came back and said, ineffect: We cannot win against the Canaanites. Therefore we should not even try.

There were two exceptions, Caleb and Joshua. Caleb came from the tribe of Judah, and Judah, we learn in the book of Bereishit, was the first baal teshuvah. Early in life he had been the one who proposed selling Joseph into slavery. But he matured. He was taught a lesson by his daughter-in-law, Tamar. He confessed, “She is more righteous than I am.” That experience seems to have changed his life. Later, when the viceroy of Egypt (Joseph, not yet recognised by the brothers) threatens to hold Benjamin as a prisoner, Judah offers to spend his life as a slave so that his brother can go free. Judah is the clearest example in Bereishit of someone who takes adversity as a learning experience rather than as failure. In Dweck’s terminology, he had a growth mindset. Evidently he handed on this trait to his descendants, Caleb among them.

As for Joshua, the text tells us, specifically in the story of the spies, that Moses had changed his name. Originally he was called Hoshea, but Moses added a letter to his name (Num. 13: 16). A change of name always implies a change of character or calling. Abram became Abraham. Jacob became Israel. When our name changes, says Maimonides, it is as if we or someone else were saying, "You are not the same person as you were before" (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 2: 4). Anyone who has experienced a name-change has been inducted into a growth mindset.

People with the growth mindset do not fear failure. They relish challenges. They know that if they fail, they will try again until they succeed. It cannot be coincidence that the two people among the spies who had the growth mindset were also the two who were unafraid of the risks and trials of conquering the land. Nor can it be accidental that the ten others, all of whom carried the burden of people's expectations (as leaders, princes, men of high rank) were reluctant to do so.

If this analysis is correct, the story of the spies holds a significant message for us. G-d does not ask us never to fail. He asks of us that we give of our best. He lifts us when we fall and forgives us when we fail. It is this that gives us the courage to take risks. That is what Joshua and Caleb knew, one through his name change, the other through the experience of his ancestor Judah.

Hence the paradoxical but deeply liberating truth: Fear of failure causes us to fail. It is the willingness to fail that allows us to succeed.