

PARSHAT SHELACH LECHA
NUMBERS 13:1-15:41
HAFTARAH JOSHUA 2:1-24
26 SIVAN 5786/11 JUNE 2026



No. 61
Mark Rothko

TO DISCOVER LOVE

1. “It does indeed flow with milk and honey...but we also saw the Anakites there...All the people we saw in it are men of great size...We saw the Nephilim. And we looked like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so we were in their eyes.” (Numbers 13:27-33)
2. “The land that we traversed and scouted is good. If God is pleased with us, God will bring us into that land, a land that flows with milk and honey, and give it to us.” (Numbers 14:7-8)
3. The whole community intended to hurl stones at them the Presence of God appeared in the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites God said to Moses... (Numbers 14:10-11)

וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעֵדָה לְרָגוֹם אֹתָם בָּאֲבָנִים וַיִּכְבֹּד יְיָ נִרְאָה בְּאַהֲלֵ מוֹעֵד

This teaches that they took stones and threw them upward as if to throw them at God.
(Talmud, Sotah 35a)

4. They said, “We looked like grasshoppers in our own eyes.” God said, “This I can overlook. But, ‘And so we looked in their eyes’ – here I am angry! Did you know how I made you look in their eyes? Who told you that you didn’t look like angels in their eyes?” (Midrash Tanchuma, Shelach 7)

5. On “uncanny disruption.” “What is peculiar to irony is that it manifests passion for a certain direction. It is because I care about teaching that I have come to a halt as a teacher. Coming to a halt in a moment of ironic uncanniness is how I manifest—in that moment—that teaching matters to me. I have a strong desire to be moving in a certain direction—that is, in the direction of becoming and being a teacher—but I lack orientation.”

 “The aim of unity should not be to overcome these disruptions, but to find ways to live well with them. Ironically, the unity that is available to us is a peculiar form of disunity.”
 Jonathan Lear, *A Case for Irony*)

- “Disunity is the beginning of unity.” (Jonathan Lear)

6. I’m interested only in expressing basic human emotions — tragedy, ecstasy, doom, and so on — and the fact that lots of people break down and cry when confronted with my pictures shows that I communicate those basic human emotions... The people who weep before my pictures are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them. (Mark Rothko)

7. וַיִּדְבֹּר יְיָ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר שְׁלַח־לְךָ

8. Like any great work of art, Torah is designed to draw you in, to make you realize that what you are witnessing is something that you yourself have experienced.