



new london
synagogue



Courage mes amis.

A sense of fear of the future hangs over this week's Torah reading, as, perhaps, it does over our contemporary times.

Moses has led the Children of Israel to the border of the promised land and sends spies into the land to report, "what kind of land is it, and the people, are they strong or weak, and the cities, are they unwalled or

fortresses"?

Midrash Tanhuma (and Rashi) suggest Moses meant this – if the people are strong, they will live in unwalled cities – for they are unafraid rely on their own strength should challenge come, and if the people are weak, they will shelter behind walls, afraid of challenge. But the spies get the wrong idea. They see walled cities and come back convinced that this means the people are strong.

New challenges always feel scary. Our mind is drawn towards fear and a desire to hang onto a status quo, even if we are not yet at the Promised Land. But we need to learn courage, and know we are, in slightly reworded but always relevant phrase of A.A. Milne's silly old bear, "braver than we believe, stronger than we seem and smarter than we think.

Aside from the trains, inflation and everything else, we bid farewell to Chazan Stephen Cotsen this Shabbat. We are completely booked out for the dinner, but we would love your company in prayer and song at services over Shabbat where I might be sharing a few words in honour of our Chazan. Scary times, but we are strong, we are very strong.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Jeremy