TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories Compiled by Yitzchok Henry





לעילוי נשמת



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וַיַּהַס כָּלֵב אֶת־הָעָם - "***Kalev silenced the people . . .***" (13:30)

R' Moshe Feinstein z"l observes: Hashem considered this to be a great act, as it is written (14:24), "*But my servant Kalev, because a different spirit was with him and he followed Me wholeheartedly ..*" - We can learn several lessons from this.

First, we can learn that a person is obligated to speak or act when G-d's honor is at stake, even if he will not make an impact (just as Kalev is praised even though his rebuke was not heeded). Perhaps even one person will listen.

Second, we can learn that, just as we are obligated to do everything possible to lengthen another person's life even if we know that that person has only a short time to live, so, too, we are obligated to lengthen a person's spiritual life, even if it will be short-lived. This is what happened here, where the spies retorted to Kalev's words by repeating the same thing they had said before; apparently, Kalev swayed his listeners briefly – for which the Torah praises him – and the spies had to repeat their attack on the Land.

(Darash Moshe)

In this week's Parashah we read of the incident of the spies, as a result of which the generation of the Exodus was sentenced to die in the desert rather than enter Eretz Yisrael. Yet it appears that Bnei Yisrael repented (see 14:39-40). Why did Hashem not accept their repentance?



R' Yaakov Kranz z"l (1747-1805; the Dubno Maggid) explains with a parable: A certain lower-class person became wealthy. He had a daughter, and a matchmaker proposed two prospective grooms for her–one boy, rich but with a bad reputation; the other boy, poor, but the son of the local rabbi. The girl's father said, "I would rather take the poor son of the rabbi, but at least let the rabbi buy his son a proper suit for the wedding."

The rabbi said that he could not meet this condition. "If he wants to make a match with me, it will be with no preconditions or dowry." The girl's relatives implored her father to accept the rabbi's son anyway, and he relented.

The rabbi, however, said, "I regret discussing a match with you. At first, I thought that you wanted a match with someone from a good family and that you valued Torah scholars. But, now that I see that, for materialistic things, you would have taken just anybody, I cannot make a match with you. Since you don't appreciate the value of a Torah scholar, what common ground do we have?!"

Similarly, says the Dubno Maggid, a generation that could say that it was better off in Egypt simply was not compatible with Eretz Yisrael. Apparently, all they ever wanted was its fruits, not its spiritual riches. (Mishlei Yaakov)

From the Haftarah . . .

וַיֵּאָמַר לְמֶלֶךְ יְרִיחוֹ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה אֲנָשִׁים בָּאוּ הֵנָּה הַלַּיְלָה מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַחְפֹּר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ - ***"It was told to the king of Yericho saying, `Behold! — men have come here tonight from Bnei Yisrael to search out [literally, `to dig out'] the Land'."*** (Yehoshua 2:2)



Why did he use the unusual phrase "to search out" (literally, "to dig out") instead of saying, "to see" or "to spy upon"?

R' Zvi Elimelech of Dinov z"l (chassidic rebbe, best known by the title of his work Bnei Yissaschar; died 1841) explains: The Gemara equates Eretz Yisrael with the hide of gazelle. When a gazelle is skinned, its hide shrinks so it appears as if it could never have accommodated the body that previously was inside it. Eretz Yisrael, too, appears unable to support all of the Jewish People, but it "grows" to meet the need. Recognizing this requires looking beneath the surface; hence the expression "to search out" rather than merely "to see" the Land.

(R' Zvi Elimelech adds: Although the verse attributes this idea to the servant of the non-Jewish king, apparently Hashem put those words in his mouth.) (Derech Edotecha)

"Even if our good deeds were as numerous as the grains of sand by the sea, they wouldn't equal even one of the many kindnesses that Hashem bestows upon us." ~ Sefer Chovos Halvavos.

הָאָ֗רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר עָבַ֤רְנוּ בָהּ֙ לָתֻ֣ר אֹתָ֔הּ טוֹבָ֥ה הָאָ֛רֶץ מְאֹ֖ד מְאֹֽד - "***The Land through which we passed to reconnoiter it — the Land is very, very good***." (14:7)

R' Chaim Palagi z"l (1788-1868; rabbi of Izmir, Turkey) writes: The punishment of those who spoke ill of Eretz Yisrael is well known, as described in our parashah. One is forbidden to speak ill of Eretz Yisrael – not only of its inhabitants, but even of the Land itself.

For example, one should praise the beauty of the mountains and should not mention that they are rocky and hard. One who mentions the faults of Eretz Yisrael speaks lashon hara and can cause others to despise the Land.

The Gemara (Ketubot 114a) mentions that the sage Rabbi Abba used to kiss the stones near Akko (the northern border of the Land at that time), while the sage Rabbi Chiya would smooth out the roads so that nobody would trip and thereby have cause to criticize the Land.

If Rabbi Chiya went to that extent to protect the good name of the Land itself, certainly one should never speak ill of the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Pninei Rav Chaim Palagi p.381)

This Week in History, Halachah, and Minhag

27 Sivan: Some people fast today to commemorate the burning by the Romans of the Tanna / sage of the Mishnah, Rabbi Chananyah ben Teradyon z"l Hy"d, together with a sefer Torah (Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 580:2). This event is recorded in the kinot of Tishah B'Av as well as in the Mussaf of Yom Kippur.

R' Yehuda He'chassid z"l (died 1217) writes that one should limit pleasure trips on the day on which a tzaddik died. (Sefer Chassidim)

On this date in 5701 (June 22, 1941), Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

Friday night, Parashat Shelach: Some have the custom that, on this Shabbat and in other weeks when we the parashah speaks of Bnei Yisrael's rebelliousness in the desert, the chazzan for Kabbalat Shabbat does not recite aloud the verse, "For forty years I was angry with the generation . . ." (Luach Davar B'ito p.1092)

29 Sivan: On this date, the Spies were sent to Eretz Yisrael.

R' Chaim Vital z"l writes that the months of Adar through Sivan are a time when prayers are readily accepted (Note to Zohar, Acharei p. 58a). Accordingly, one should use the waning hours of this month to beseech Hashem for his needs. (Luach Davar B'ito p.1109)

Rosh Chodesh Tamuz: The name of this month (Tamuz) is an acronym for the Hebrew phrase, "Zemanei Teshuvah Me'mashmishim U'va'im" / "The times of repentance are drawing closer." Therefore, "Zerizim Makdimim V'osim Teshuvah" / "The alacritous do not wait to repent." (Luach Davar B'ito p.1115)



In Izmir Turkey, it was customary to close the talmud Torah on this day and to take the children on a nature hike. Some have speculated that, because the children need a day off in the hot summer, a day was chosen which often falls in the week when we read the verse (Bemidbar 24:6), "Like gardens by a river, like aloes planted by Hashem, like cedars by water." Others say that it is because the gematria of "Tamuz" (453) equals the gematria of "ginat" / "garden of." (Luach Davar B'ito)



וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־נַחַל אֶשְׁכֹּל וַיִּכְרְתוּ מִשָּׁם זְמוֹרָה וְאֶשְׁכֹּול עֲנָבִים אֶחָד וַיִּשָּׂאֻהוּ בַמּוֹט בִּשְׁנָיִם וּמִן־הָרִמֹּנִים וּמִן־ הַתְּאֵנִים - "***They arrived at the Valley of Eshkol and cut from there a vine with one cluster of grapes, and bore it on a double pole, and of the pomegranates and of the figs.***" (13:23)

Rashi z"l explains how the Spies carried these fruits and concludes his comment: "It is an accepted fact that a load which a person can by himself lift up on to his shoulder is only the third of the load he can carry if people assist him in lifting it up."

R' Zalman Zev z"l (1789-1866; "R' Velvel Maggid"; Vilna) observes: A similar principle applies to sin–i.e., the more people that are involved or the more public it is, the easier it is for the sinner to bear and, therefore, the more difficult repentance is.

This is the meaning of the prophet Yirmiyah's rebuke (Yirmiyah 6:15), "Were they ashamed that they had committed abominations? They will never feel shame; they will not know humiliation." [Because there were many people committing the same sin, they were not ashamed.] (Teomei Tziviyah ch.10)

"Challenges are not simply an unfortunate fact of life, but rather, a sign of Hashem's trust and confidence in your ability to prevail." ~ Rabbi Yehuda Heimowitz.

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת עַל־כַּנְפֵי בִגְדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתְנוּ עַל־צִיצִת הַכָּנָף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת - "***Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them that they shall make tzitzit for themselves*** . . ." (15:38)

R' Yitzchak Meltzen z"l (1854-1916; Lithuania and Eretz Yisrael) writes: The word "tzitzit" can mean "hair," as in Yechezkel (8:3), "He took me by the lock of my head." Also, it can mean a place from which to watch, as in Shir Ha'shirim (2:9), "Observing through the windows, mei'tzitz / peering through the lattices."

Combining these two meanings, we can understand the mitzvah of



tzitzit as saying to us: Pay attention! These strings are your lifeline; they can connect you to G-d. However, if you are not conscious of this fact, if you are not watching, they will accomplish nothing, just as tying a string around your finger will not help you remember anything unless, at the time you tie the string, you say to yourself, "This is a reminder of such-and-such." Similarly, if you see the tzitzit all day long, but have never thought about what they are meant to remind you of, then they will remind you of nothing. (Siddur Ishei Yisrael: Siach Yitzchak)

"When a Jew stands before us asking for help, we should imagine that it is Hashem sending us a golden invitation to ascend towards Him. Nothing is more precious to Hashem than our acts of kindness and our caring for each other." ~ Rav Menachem Azolai.



שְׁלַח לְךָ אֲנָשִׁים - '***Send forth men, if you please***.' (13:2)



Rashi notes the words Sh'lach lecha, "Send for yourself," suggesting that the lecha, for yourself, is superfluous. The pasuk should have said, Shlach anashim; "Send men." What is added by lecha?

Rashi explains that Hashem was intimating that He had not commanded Moshe Rabbeinu to send spies: **אֲנִי אֵינִי מְצַוֶּה לְךָ**; "I am not commanding you to do this. It is up to you – if you want to do it – then you may send."

Sometimes a person predetermines his decisions. He is not going to change, to give in, to concede that he might be in error. Nothing will compel him to see the light, the error of his ways, other than the error itself. - Let him go, and when he fails, he will realize that he has made a mistake.

For some, this is the only avenue. This type of person must fail before he succeeds, since he refuses to face the reality of his own fallibility.

The nation demanded spies. The people were beyond convincing. They would not accept the fact that what they demanded impugned

Hashem as the One Who had taken them out of Egypt, protected and sustained them up until this very moment. Their demand was ludicrous. They were not an army with the ability, skill and weaponry to undertake such a major battle. They were an aggregate of slaves recently released from two centuries of brutal servitude. Such a group only responds to a shlach lecha – "go" and see for yourself. For them, this was the only way.

The Lelover Rebbe, Horav Elimelech Biderman, Shlita, renders this pasuk homiletically. Rashi's words: Ani eini metzavecha, "I am not commanding you," can be understood as: Ani, "I." Those individuals who are always prefixing their statements with "I," "me," or "myself" are individuals who view everything as if it is all about them: they do; they achieve; they perform. - Such people refuse to recognize that everything which they do is actually achieved via the grace of Hashem. We do nothing; Hashem does it all. Those whose world revolves around the ani, "I," Eini metzavecha, "I do not want you to send them as meraglim." They will not succeed. - Hashem seeks men of humility, individuals who recognize that everything is derived from Him.

The Rebbe quotes Rabbeinu Yonah (commentary to Mishlei 3:6) who teaches, "Know! There are people who remember Hashem when they are about to undertake a major endeavor, such as setting sail over the sea, a trip by caravan, or a large business deal.

Unfortunately, when it involves matters of a lesser nature, they seem to forget about Hashem, because they consider the endeavor simple enough for them to execute (on their own), or they think that, since it is not of considerable import, even if they fail, it will be an insignificant loss. (Therefore, they attempt to do these deeds on their own and do not place their trust in Hashem.)

"In order to correct this (misguided outlook), the pasuk teaches, בְּכָל־דְּרָכֶיךָ דָּעֵהוּ, '*For all your ways, know Him (remember Hashem)*' [Mishlei 3:6]. Whether it is for large matters or small matters; for

everything is in Hashem's Hands, and all of our achievements are totally dependent upon His kindness. (Without Hashem, we have no chance whatsoever of achieving success in anything). Therefore, remember Hashem for all your deeds, and He will guide and assist you. Your bitachon, trust, in Hashem, will be immensely rewarded, because it is so special in Heaven."

Bitachon in Hashem pays off in success in one's life. We must accustom ourselves to acknowledge Hashem for everything that happens in our lives. Without Him, it would just not happen.

We have become so used to believing in ourselves that we have lost sight of the real source of our success. How easy it is to forget; how sad it is when we are "reminded." B'ezras Hashem, Baruch Hashem, B'sayata diShmaya, should be our constant catchphrases, because Hashem is our constant protector and facilitator.

כָּל נָשִׂיא בָהֶם – '*Everyone a leader among them*'. (13:2)



The word Nasi, prince, leader, is comprised of four letters which, when separated, make up two words which are opposites of one another. Nasi – nun, sin, yud, aleph: within these four letters are the words **יש**, which means "there is," and **אן**, "there is naught."

Otzar HaChaim sees this as an allusion to the quality of a Nasi's character. The Nasi who considers himself to be a yeish (there is;

he is something), in actuality, has nothing; he is an ayin. The Nasi who views himself through the eyes of humility, who sees himself as an ayin, is thus a yeish. Such a Nasi has something to offer: his sterling character and humility.

What happened to the Nesiim that were sent as meraglim, spies, to reconnoiter Eretz Yisrael? These were once distinguished leaders, men of virtue and character. How did they fall from such an elevated spiritual perch to end their lives in complete ignominy?

The Steipler Gaon, zl, explains that they fell prey to gaavah, misplaced arrogance, because they had been elevated to the position of meraglim. Rather than view themselves in their true context as shluchim, agents of the nation, sent to bring back a report, they suddenly decided that Hashem required their input. The nation could go no further until the meraglim returned with their report. They would determine the feasibility of successfully conquering Eretz Yisrael. It was all up to them.

How ludicrous! How audacious! How delusional could one be to believe that G-d Who brought Egypt to its knees required the assistance and advice of twelve puny men!

It all boils down to arrogance. A little bit of kavod, prestige, distinction, eminence, can destroy one's ability to see clearly. The most astute and clear-thinking individual can become so self-absorbed, that what otherwise would be viewed as ludicrous suddenly becomes cogent.

There is no question that a rational person would never have imagined that Hashem required his assistance to determine the Jewish army's ability to conquer Eretz Yisrael. One who overnight rose from citizen to leader, from member of the tribe to its prince/leader, was sadly capable of falling into the abyss of arrogance. Once a tragedy like this occurs, the disease that results is often incurable without extreme therapy and, in the aftermath,

can cause a person to lose sight of Who is the Creator and true manhig, guide, of the world.

A caveat which I think is appropriate. The Torah writes that a judge may not accept a bribe, **כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יְעַוֵּר פִּקְחִים וְיסַלֵּף דִּבְרֵי צַדִּיקִים**, "*For a bribe will blind those who see and corrupts words that are just*" (Shemos 23:8).

If the Torah writes it, one may accept it as an absolute verity. Bribery blinds; bribery perverts. Is there any greater form of bribery than a little kavod which leads to gaavah?

One who becomes haughty is self-bribed. He becomes blind to himself because he begins to see through self-colored lenses. He now sees what he wants to see. -Such myopic vision is a form of self-imposed blindness.

וַיַּקְרִיבוּ אֹתוֹ הַמּוֹצְאִים אֹתוֹ מְקשֵׁשׁ עֵצִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל כָּל־הָעֵדָה - '***The Bnei Yisrael were in the wilderness and they found a man gathering wood on the Shabbos day***.' (15:32)



The Maharal m'Prague (Gur Aryeh), notes that the mekoshesh eitzim, one who gathered wood on Shabbos, carried out his act of contempt during the second Shabbos of the Jews in the wilderness. Apparently, they observed the first Shabbos.

Chazal teach (Shabbos 118b) that had they observed two Shabbosos, they would not have experienced the bitter exile. Shabbos is the great panacea which would have protected them.

Why did the mekoshesh desecrate the second Shabbos? He acted for the sake of Heaven (or so he believed), in order that people would realize that Shabbos observance was serious business. When they would see the punishment meted out against someone who desecrates the Shabbos, they would think twice before acting against the Torah.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, applies his captivating imagery to describe the ascent of the mekoshes eitzim to Heaven with the delusionary thought in his mind that he (of all people) was deserving of a front seat in Gan Eden. After all, by desecrating Shabbos, he taught the entire nation a valuable lesson.

As he was waiting for his special pass, the Angels in charge asked for a few moments, while they showed him some meaningful scenes from Jewish history – scenes that were, in effect, the result of his "selfless" act of desecrating Shabbos to teach the people a lesson. They first showed him the Churban Bais Hamikdash, destruction of the First Temple, followed by the destruction of the Second Temple and the Jewish nation's exile from the Holy Land. This was followed by the rivers of Jewish blood, results of the systematic murders, pogroms, inquisitions and holocaust that wreaked havoc on our people.

Seeing this, the mekoshesh began to wonder, "Why are you showing this to me? I am here to collect my due for the wonderful act of teaching the Jews the significance of Shabbos."

They looked at him and calmly responded, "We simply would like you to see some of the results of your wonderful selfless act of profaning the second Shabbos of the year. Had you not desecrated that Shabbos, there would have been no destruction of the Temples, no exile, no pogroms, no inquisition, no holocaust – just peace and serenity. If you thought that your idea was so compelling, why did you not speak it over with Moshe Rabbeinu? As the preeminent Torah sage, he would have guided your actions. You thought that you

were smart. You now realize that such a statement could not be further from the truth!"

We must never forget that our minds and thought process are, for the most part, subjective. The mere feeling that we are acting l'shem Shomayim neither sets nor determines the criteria for l'shem Shomayim. For that decision we have gedolei Yisrael, Torah giants, who are steeped in Torah and its wisdom. They are the individuals who, based upon their daas Torah, should render such a decision.



בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה יִפְּלוּ פִגְרֵיכֶם – '***In this wilderness shall your carcasses drop***.' (14:29)

Ever since that first Tishah B'Av, when the meraglim, spies, returned with their slanderous report of Eretz Yisrael, Tishah B'Av became a sad, fateful night for the male members of Klal Yisrael. The decree had been issued that they would not enter into the Promised Land. The wilderness would become their graveyard.

Every Tishah B'Av every (eligible) Jew dug a grave for himself, lay down in it and prayed. Would he wake up in the morning, or would this be his last night on earth?

Every year, fifteen thousand men did not wake up. Whoever did not arise in the morning, yoshev b'seiser elyon (the chapter recited at a funeral when the deceased is being taken on his final journey to his grave) was recited next to his grave and then he was covered. (I have always felt that a lesson may be derived from this sort of morbid self-burial. One who slanders – ultimately buries himself.)

This scenario continued on every Tishah B'Av until the final year, when the last group of fifteen thousand Jews laid themselves to rest. An astonishing thing took place on the next day: nothing happened. They were all alive! This must be some mistake, they thought. So, the next night, they repeated the procedure – and the

next – and the next – until the fifteenth of Av, when they realized that Hashem must have rescinded the decree.

Why? What was different during the last year that had allowed these Jews to live?

Horav Chaim Tzarkovsky (cited by **Horav Shlomo Levinstein**) explains that it was their davening, praying, that made the difference. It is not as if the previous groups did not pray to live. They certainly prayed, but theirs were not prayers that emanated from the deepest recesses of their hearts, because they all knew that their death was not a sure thing. Only fifteen thousand would die. Who said they were to be among the unlucky ones?

When the last year arrived, the men knew this was it. There were no others. It was them – or nothing. Thus, their prayers were powerful. They knew that, unless Hashem listened to their prayers, they would die. The fear and trepidation that accompanied their prayers were unlike anything heretofore experienced by any members of the Jewish People. They all thought death was not inevitable. They had an option; they had hope. The last group had exhausted all options and all hope. Prayer was their only option.

Indeed, prayer is (always) our only option. If we would always daven the way we do when we are up against a wall with no options, our prayer would achieve greater efficacy. Anyone who has ever had his options taken away and is suddenly compelled to realize that there is only one way out – either gives up hope or, if he is a believer, prays like he has never prayed before. - This is the definition of avodas ha'tefillah, praying as if no other options exist.

"Hashem's presence may be concealed, but His fingerprints can be seen in every aspect of creation." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.

וַנְּהִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כַּחֲגָבִים וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם – *'We were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so were we in their eyes.'* (13:33)



The meraglim felt a sense of low esteem when they heard the Canaanites refer to them as grasshoppers. These people were giants and, to them, the Jewish spies appeared quite puny.

Why is it necessary to inform us how they felt about themselves? All that is necessary for the reader to know is that the Canaanite giants perceived the Jews as tiny insects.

Perhaps the lesson is that, as long as one maintains his own self-esteem, others will also respect him. Once the meraglim felt like grasshoppers, they were, in turn, viewed as grasshoppers.

One cannot be put down unless he has already lost his self-esteem. It begins with you and ends with you. As long as one maintains his self-esteem and carries himself with dignity, no one can affect him. It is when he loses his dignity that others complete the damage.

On the other hand, once the meraglim said, "We were like grasshoppers in our (own) eyes," why is it necessary to write that they were bothered by the Canaanites' opinion of them? As long as they felt inadequate, it should have been sufficient reason for them to be miserable.

The first Bobover Rebbe, **Horav Shlomo Halberstam, zl**, distinguishes between one who has false humility and one who is truly humble. Some people present themselves as humble, but Heaven help those who do not give them the respect and honor, which they feel

they deserve. For all intents and purposes they act with humility, deferring to others what they really want for themselves. If someone else (other than themselves) were to pass them over, they would be insulted and outraged. In some not-so-subtle manner, they would inform the person that they deserve better.

This is false humility. It is all show for the purpose of attention. Indeed, no greater arrogance exists than false humility.

The meraglim were distinguished men of noble pedigree and social standing. The mere fact that they were chosen to represent their individual tribes is, in and of itself, a powerful indicator of their stature in the nation. In public, however, they portrayed themselves as humble Jews, paragons of modesty, meek and submissive – until someone else put them down, until they heard the Canaanites referring to them as grasshoppers. Then the truth about their false humility came out. They were bothered by this negative inference to their stature. They were not so humble after all.



וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת עַל־כַּנְפֵי בִגְדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם.. וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת ה׳

'***They shall make Tzitzis on the corners of their garments, throughout their generations…that you may see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem***.' (15:38,39)

The Eliyahu Rabbah (Ohr HaChaim 24:3) quotes, "It is found in the Rishonim that, whoever passes the Tzitzis over his eyes during the recital of Krias Shema, is ensured that he will not become blind.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, writes that he was questioned by an ophthalmologist concerning this segulah, talisman, that protects from blindness. How does it work? What reason is there?

Rav Zilberstein explained, quoting the Chida, who explains why Egypt was struck with the plague of Choshech, darkness. The Egyptians "closed their eyes," made themselves forget the good fortune which they experienced with the arrival of Yaakov Avinu. Therefore, they

were plagued with an inability to see. He supports this thesis, explaining that the word choshech, darkness, has the same letters as '*shochach*', forget. Because they forgot (Yaakov's favors), they were plagued with darkness.

Also, adds Rav Zilberstein, darkness has the same letters as '*kicheish*', deny. The Egyptians denied that they were in debt to Yaakov and, by extension, his descendants. Therefore, when a Jew passes the Tzitzis over his eyes, in order to remember and to underscore that, unlike the Egyptians who forgot, we choose to remember the exodus from Egypt. We are not like our oppressors.

The Tallis Gadol which one wears for prayer has another significance to it, in that "it" attests to the character of its wearer during his encounter with Hashem during Tefillah.

Horav Aharon, zl, m'Belz, would encourage the boys who became bar mitzvah (and begin wearing Tefillin daily) to accept upon themselves not to speak other than words of Torah while wearing the Tefillin. One of the boys kept his word, adhering to his promise throughout his teenage years until he became a chassan, engaged to be married. - At this point, the Rebbe summoned him into his office and asked him, "Are you prepared to extend your acceptance not to speak idle talk even when wearing the Tallis Gadol?" (This refers to Shabbos and Yom Tov.) The young man agreed, "Yes, I accept not to speak devarim bitailim, idle talk, when I am wearing my Tallis."

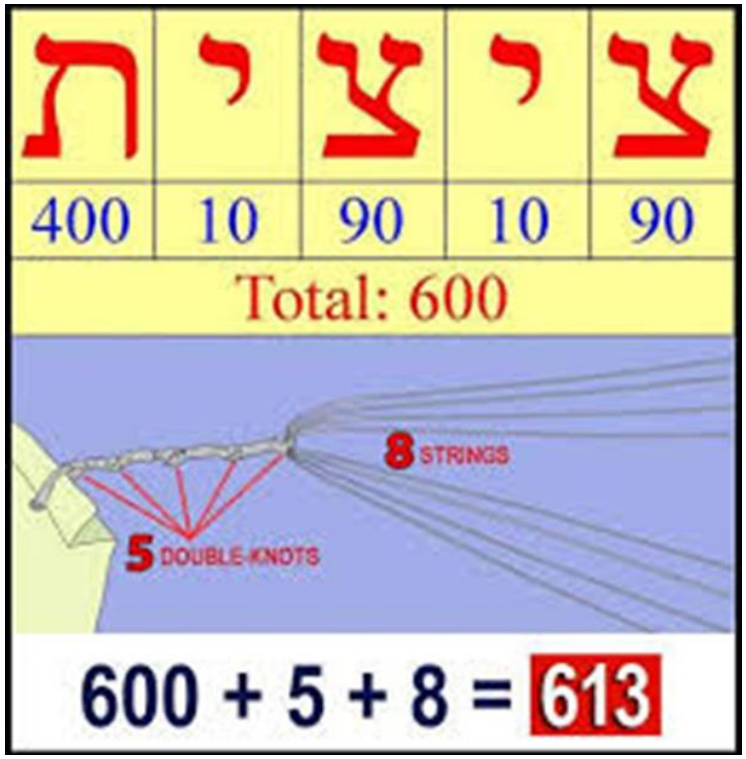
The Rebbe then shared with the young man a frightening scenario: "When you will leave this world and stand before the Heavenly Tribunal, you will be overcome with fear. This is the moment of Truth when all is revealed and everyone is judged. You will be able to say the following:

'As all Jewish deceased, I am standing before the Tribunal wrapped in the Tallis, which I wore during davening throughout my life. Since, during my lifetime, I refused to speak idle talk, speaking only words of Torah, I would like to do the same right now! I ask that the

Tribunal only speak words of Torah with me – not to discuss my past, the indiscretions that I (might have) committed in my life.'"

It is related that when the Tallis belonging to the **Taz** became old and unacceptable (at least in the eyes of his members) to wear, the Jewish community of Lvov (where he was Rav) purchased a new Tallis for him. He absolutely refused to wear it. He said, "My old Tallis can testify before the Heavenly Tribunal that I had no stray thoughts during (the prayer of) Shemoneh Esrai

When we next don our Tallis, we should pause for a moment and think that (possibly) this Tallis might accompany us to the moment of truth. It can serve in our defence – or prosecution, depending upon our demeanour when wearing it.



וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִת וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת ה' - '***That you may see it and remember all the mitzvos of Hashem.***' (15:39)

The Torah reveals to us that by seeing the tzitzis we might remember all of the mitzvos. Consequently, we will be inspired to perform them. - How does this transpire?

Rashi explains that the numerical equivalent of tzitzis is 600. In addition, there are eight threads and five knots, bringing it to a total of 613, the number of mitzvos which we are commanded to observe.

In the Talmud Menachos 43b Chazal comment that the techeilas, turquoise wool, which was the color of one string of each fringe, brings the Almighty to mind.

Techeilas is similar to the color of the sea, the sea to the sky, and the sky to Hashem's Throne. Thus, techeilas helps the wearer to focus on Hashem and his duty towards Him. Chazal imply that one string can inspire a person, so that he can visualize the Holy Throne. How does this happen?

Horav Zaidel Epstein, Shlita, suggests that the key lies in the word "**וּרְאִיתֶם**," "*that you may see*." We should approach the Torah in a manner that we can visualize it. We should look at tzitzis and visualize mitzvos. It must be something tangible, something that we can see, something that we can perceive.

Chazal tell us, "Who is a wise man? He who can see that which will be born." It is not sufficient to merely know what will be. It is necessary that one understand it so well that he actually sees before his very eyes what will take place.

Everyone knows that one day our sojourn on this world will come to an end, and we will eventually have to give an accounting for our behavior. But how many of us actually see it? We are to focus on mitzvos and their message to the point that we actually perceive that message.

The Alter M'Kelm was wont to say, "The difference between a tzaddik and a rasha is the ability to visualize the Torah's truth. The Rasha is not simply a non-believer, he does not see! If he would apply himself and/or open his eyes he would see. Thus, he would believe.

"Matter was created out of nothing, which is the greatest of all miracles. It follows that every stone or clod of earth is, by its mere existence, the greatest miracle. In addition, it possesses extreme holiness, for it is naught but G-d's will. It is a concretization of the Creator's word which materialized and became apparent to our senses." ~ R' Avigdor Miller zt"l.

בָּאנוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתָּנוּ וְגַם זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבַשׁ הִוא וְזֶה־פִּרְיָהּ... אֶפֶס כִּי־עַז הָעָם הַיֹּשֵׁב בָּאָרֶץ – '***We arrived at the land...And indeed it flows with milk and honey...But the people that dwell in the land are powerful***.' (13:27,28)

Realistically, did the meraglim really lie? They simply recounted what they saw. If they related the truth, why were they punished?

The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, explains that the fact that a statement is not a lie does not necessarily validate it as the truth. Just because one does not actually lie, he is not necessarily a man of integrity.

Truth and faith emanate from the deep recesses of the heart. One does not acquire the truth by looking at it. He must conjure up courage from within to look beyond that which he sees visually.

The meraglim saw a powerful nation, - but is true strength a product of physical brawn? Does not Hashem have something to say about it? How many strong and powerful nations have become extinct through the Hand of Hashem? In other words, the truth is not what one sees, but that which one understands with his heart.

A patient in the hospital may be forsaken by his doctors, but as long as Hashem wills it, he will be cured. That is the real truth.

Indeed, it takes courage to see beyond what appears superficially or beyond what one wants to see. The meraglim, unfortunately, could not muster up this courage.

All his life, the Steipler Gaon showed exceptional honor for sefarim. Once, someone watched as the Steipler withdrew the wrong sefer from a bookshelf. He would not return the sefer to the shelf without first opening it and studying from it a bit.





What is the most important thought that one should have when making a bracha?

The answer is "Atah Hashem." That's number one! You're not just saying a bracha - you're talking to somebody. The Mesillas Yesharim says that it's not an easy thing to gain that attitude and to impress on your mind that somebody is actually listening. But when you put effort into it - when you keep on trying - after a while it's possible to gain that attitude that Hashem is right in front of you and is listening. "Ki atah shomei'ah" - You are listening to "amchah Yisroel b'rachamim." Yes; You are listening. You are really listening.

He is listening - no question about it - but you have to work on gaining that attitude. Don't wait for it to come by itself. And that's the first and most important attitude required for making a bracha. Not the peirush hamilos but the true attitude of "Atah Hashem" - "You Hashem." He is listening. "I am talking to You, Hashem."

And the second important kavanah is to thank Hashem. I am thanking You Hashem. It's not enough just to know what you are saying but you should actually feel a debt of gratitude to Hashem. Thank Hashem for the favor that He has bestowed on you.

Let's say you're saying pokei'ach ivrim - "You open the eyes of the blind." Oh, what a favor that is! Suppose Hashem didn't give you the

ability to see. What a tragedy, chalilah, that would be. To live a life in total darkness. What a pity; what a pity that would be. So you are filled with happiness that you can see and you actually should feel a debt of gratitude to Hashem.

The first thing that you must work on is gaining the attitude that you are speaking directly to Hashem and that He is listening. And the second thing is that you are thanking Him and that you appreciate what you are thanking Him for. Don't make a bracha just to be yoitzei. It's better than nothing. But not much better.



Should I buy a house in Eretz Yisroel?

And the answer is that you should buy a house in the place where you're making a living. To go to Eretz Yisroel and become a *schnorrer* doesn't pay. No, no. It doesn't pay. You must make a living.

And therefore whether you buy a house or rent a house, make sure that you're in a place where you can make a living. And you should always make sure to find a frum neighborhood. - It's very important. *Sevivah*, environment, is everything. Not only for your children but for you as well.

People who live around a Yeshiva are different than people who live someplace else. You see tzitzis out. Everyone is wearing a black hat. Shabbos is a different kind of Shabbos. It's a different kind of life. It's very important to live in a frum neighborhood. And even though sometimes it may be more expensive to live there, it's worth it. I cannot overemphasize that. A frum neighborhood is most important.



If a Jew blesses another Jew, is it a tefilla?

It depends. If you do it just as a formality, just for politeness, then that's what it is – a formality. It's a way of being *mechabed* him. On the other hand, if he has *seichel* to use it as a *tefilla*, then it's a very good investment.

Now, pay attention. One of the best things in the world to do is to bless a fellow Jew. Hakodosh Boruch Hu promised Avraham, **וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרֲכֶיךָ** – '***I will bless those who bless you***'.

I'll explain that. Number one is that we have to know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is **אוהב את עמו ישראל** – *Hashem loves Jews.* No question about it. He loves Jews more than anything else in the whole world. Don't be afraid to say that. The whole Torah speaks about only that one theme – Hashem loves Jews! So if you love a Jew enough to give him a good *bracha,* Hashem will surely love you for that.

So if you sincerely wish a fellow Jew he should succeed, that he should be healthy, Hakodosh Boruch Hu is loving you at that moment intensely!

One of the best things to do is to bless your fellow Jews. So, if you say "Good morning," to your neighbor just as a formality, so that's all it is – a greeting. But if you put thought into it, then it becomes a *tefillah*, a *bracha*.

So when you pass by a house with a big *mezuzah,* waste a half minute and wish them they should all live long in that house, they should have *nachas* from their children. They should have plenty of *parnassah* and make *simchos*. As much as you can say, it will redound to your own benefit. - It's to your own benefit to bless Jews as much as you can.



Is there any meaning in a person's first name?

There's everything in the first name. Because it's like saying to Hakadosh Baruch Hu – I am Yours!" Your name shows you belong to Hashem.

If you call yourself Bertram instead of Boruch, you belong to Bertram. "If you want to stay with the nation of Bertram," Hashem says, "so stay with them." – if you're a Yisroel, I promise you Olam Haba. But you have to identify. If you identify with Bertram, then go to the Bertrams.

Rabbi Norman? That's not identifying with Hashem. What's wrong with Nachman or with Nosson? If you're Norman, you belong to the Normans, like Norman Mailer and all the other reshaim, yimach shemom v'zichrom. There are a lot of Normans that are in Gehenom today and many are on the way to Gehenom. "So if you want to be with the Normans, go ahead," Hashem said.

And therefore, the first name is your choice. Who cares what your parents called you? Give yourself a new name and use that name with pride. It's a pity when parents lose an opportunity. Here's a man who has a daughter and he calls her Rishonah. "First daughter." A meshugener. Rishonah, my first daughter.

Is that a name of one of our great mothers? He takes a name that means nothing at all. The fact that it's in Hebrew and he's calling her number one? Is that a name for a daughter? Or he calls his daughter Ilana. Ilana is a Russian name. He says, "No, it means a tree. Ilana is a female tree." No; Ilan is a tree. But Ilana is a Russian name. That's not a name to give the Jewish girl. And therefore, everything is in the first name. It shows who you belong to.



אֵינוֹ דּוֹמֶה שׁוֹנֶה פִּרְקוֹ מֵאָה פְּעָמִים, לְשׁוֹנֶה פִּרְקוֹ מֵאָה וְאֶחָד - "***One cannot compare one who learns the chapter 100 times to one who learns it 101 times.***" (Chagiga 9b).

The Mishnah Berurah 114:41 says, "Reviewing one's studies **101 times** ensures that they will not be forgotten."

The difference between 'to remember – **לזכור**' (263) and 'to forget – **לשכוח**' (364) is 101!

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Reversal Rehearsal



A common word found in the gemara is **אדרבה**, which means "On the contrary" or "Just the opposite."

Let's delve into this word: Unknown to many, this word is in essence an acronym. **R' Yitzchok Lampronti** (1679-1756) reveals that the word **אדרבה** is an acronym for **אַין דַּבר רַק בַּהיפך**, which translates into how we translate it, "Just the opposite."

Another amazing insight we find linked to this word is connected to the month of Adar. Adar is termed **חודש אשר נהפך**, the month which had turned about. (Esther 9:22.) It therefore is no coincidence that

when we break up the word **אדרבה** , we get **אדר בה** , Adar is in it. That is to say, the month of Adar has the quality of **אדרבה**, as it is a **חודש אשר נהפך**, a month of **ונהפוך הוא** ("It was turned about"). (Ibid 9:1.)

Rise in Disguise

An old tzadik once confided to R' Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810) that in his younger years he was all alone with no one taking an interest in him. He said, "Had someone encouraged me during those years, I would have been a different person. I could have accomplished ten times more in my lifetime."

The Weekly Vort

● **The Chasam Sofer** notes that one factor which may have caused the *Cheit HaMeraglim* was their being motivated by doubts about the leadership of Moshe. A few days before, Eldad and Meidad had prophesied that Moshe would die and Yehoshua would lead the people into Canaan. Now, when they had almost reached the border, they were uncertain as to whether the young and inexperienced Yehoshua would be able to lead them against a strong, well-armed enemy. (Kol HaTorah – R' Elie Munk)

● **אפס כי עז העם הישב בארץ – *But, the people that dwells in the land is powerful*** (13:28).

It was with the word "But" (**אפס**) that the spies made their big mistake. The word **אפס**, which can also be translated into "nothing," reduced all the excellence of the Land to naught. They argued that all the good qualities of the Land were of no value to *Klal Yisrael* if the fierceness of the inhabitants and the great fortifications of their cities were going to keep the people from ever enjoying them. [Ramban] (Kol HaTorah – R' Elie Munk)

A Miraculous Catch - Rabbi Shlomo Landau



I want to share with you an incredibly miraculous story.

There was a family that decided to go away for a few days. They booked an apartment on the 4th floor of a high-rise building. They decided to stay there over Shabbos and have a nice break and a change of scenery.

Shabbos afternoon, the parents decided to take a nap. They go into the bedroom, and they go to sleep. They left their kids playing in the dining room and the living room. There were plenty of toys there and the kids were having a great time.

All of a sudden, the door to their bedroom bursts open and one of the kids shrieked, "Zevi (2 yrs old) climbed over the balcony, and he fell!"

The parents panicked, and went running out of their bedroom, and dashed to the room with the balcony. They looked down, expecting to see the worst. They could not believe the sight that they were looking at – It turns out that the previous night, right before the person situated directly beneath their apartment went to sleep, for some inexplicit reason, he had completely opened his balcony awning. Little Zevi had fallen into the open canopy, and was completely unharmed, not a scratch, not a bruise!

What an incredible miracle! Who put the notion to open the awning the night before for no apparent reason that saved the boy upstairs? Of course Hakadosh Baruch Hu. – We say it every day in

davening, עֶרֶב וְעַל נִסֶּיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוּבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל עֵת וָבֹקֶר וְצָהֳרָיִם – for the daily miracles that happen to us, and sometimes we see the wonderment that Hashem does for us all the time.

Let's open our eyes, and see the incredible miracles that Hashem does for us all the time.



NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"L

The Best Buy

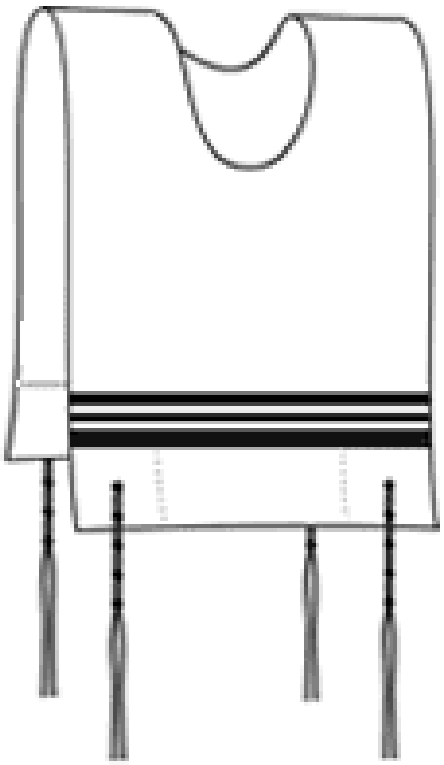
וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת – '*They shall make tzitzis for themselves*.' (15:38)

We don't really know how to decide which *mitzvos* are more "important." We must do them all. *Chazal* said: Be as careful about a light *mitzvah* as about a severe *mitzvah*, because you don't know what reward the *mitzvos* bear.

Nevertheless, there are certain *mitzvos* that we know to be especially important, and the Torah exhorts us especially to keep them. One of these is *tzitzis*, mentioned at the end of this week's *parshah*, about which *Chazal* say that it is equal to all the *mitzvos* put together.

There are a lot of other teachings of *Chazal* that emphasize just how important this *mitzvah* is, and what a great reward we will receive for keeping it. If you are smart, you will take *mitzvos*:

חֲכַם־לֵב יִקַּח מִצְוֹת – *The wise of heart will take mitzvos.* (Mishlei 10:8)



And this saying applies especially to the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*. - How so?

A person should approach *mitzvos* as would a smart businessman. When you are in business, you want to buy cheap and sell expensive. That's how you make money. So a good businessman has an eye out for this kind of merchandise. - Accordingly, *tzitzis* is a really good buy.

Some *mitzvos* entail a considerable financial layout. What do a good pair of *tefillin* cost?

But not *tzitzis*. - It is so easy! It just costs a few dollars, and once you put the *tzitzis* on, you earn a great *mitzvah* every moment you wear them, even if you aren't thinking about it. - It's like making a one-time investment of a few dollars in a business that doesn't take time, effort or further thought, and it registers profits not just once a year but every single moment of the day.

It will add up to millions. Who wouldn't invest in such a business? Either someone who is totally stupid, or someone who doesn't believe, and the second is worse than the first.

The *Yetzer Hara* knows all this, so he tries hard to keep people from doing the *mitzvah*. For those not yet used to wearing *tzitzis*, he puts the idea into their head that it is hard and uncomfortable, especially during the summer. This is silly. People wear shirts and undershirts anyways. - Adding a light *tallis katan* made from thin cotton makes hardly any difference at all. It is easy to get used to, and it is worth millions!

For those who wear *tzitzis* regularly, the *Yetzer Hara* has a different trick. He lets them get so used to it that they don't pay

attention to their *tzitzis* anymore, and sooner or later, some of the strings tear or break, and then the person is wearing a four-cornered garment without valid *tzitzis*. So instead of a *mitzvah* every moment, it is an *aveirah* every moment.

Tzitzis is a very precious *mitzvah* and we need to pay proper attention to it. "***He who is careful to fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzis will merit greeting the Shechinah.***" (Menachos 43b.)

TORAH Sweets

Short And Sweet Story of The Week By R'Yoni Schwartz

Rabbi Eliezer Geldzhaler, ZT"L, the Rosh yeshiva of Ohr Yisrael in Brooklyn, was known by his students as a great role model. Unfortunately, he was killed in a bus accident.



Two years afterward, his daughter pulled into a full-service gas station where a "vertically challenged" individual approached to fill her tank. The short man saw a picture of her father, Rav Geldzhaler, in the car and asked, "You know this man?" She responded, "Yes, that was my father." The man replied, "What do you mean 'was' your father?" She took a deep breath and explained that he passed away two years ago in an accident. After hearing this, the man started to cry.

Puzzled, she asked, "You knew my father?" He replied, "Of course I knew him! Every week, he would come to fill up his car. Normally, when people see my height, they avoid making eye contact with me. However, when your father saw me, he said, 'You're an inspiration.' I asked what he meant. He continued, 'You are physically challenged - yet you got yourself a job and you're doing something with your life. You are an inspiration! I have a yeshiva full of students and I am going to tell them all about you. What you are doing is an amazing thing.'

Your father made me feel like a million dollars and every time he came, he gave me a smile and a good word."

Those encounters changed his life and are experiences he never forgot.

Comment: Our Parsha's main theme, the evil report about the land of Israel by the spies, highlights the power of negative speech. If negative speech is strong enough to crush an entire generation's hopes of entering their promised land, then positive speech is certainly strong enough to rebuild our shattered aspirations and materialize our disappointed dreams!

So, the next time we pass by somebody who doesn't have too many friends or is socially awkward, let's make sure to give them a warm smile and a good word, because - as we learn from Rav Geldzhaler - one smile and/or one good word, can change a person's life.

"We are all complimentary of each other, none of us complete, each one contributing what the other lacks, each one adding his touch of perfection to his fellow. Like a massive jigsaw puzzle, we fit together to make a single perfect whole. None of us is perfect without all the rest of us. And all the rest of us are incomplete when a single individual is missing." ~ R' Tzvi Freeman.



מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

In 1946, American scientist Adelbert Ames Jr. invented something called the "Ames room." An Ames room is a distorted room that creates an optical illusion. When viewed through a peephole, the room appears to have distorted perspective. One of the most interesting effects of an Ames room is that the distorted perspective can make people and objects look much bigger or smaller than they really are. For this reason, Ames rooms are widely used for practical special effects. - The Land of Israel is often referred to as the "Ames Room" of the world. It appears to be bigger than it really is.

In the late 1980's a Chinese teenager made his way to the shores of America. He wanted to raise his education level and decided that the United States of America, the world financial capital, would be the place for him. He was exceptionally bright and he managed to procure a visa for "reasons of higher education" - which was the purpose of his trip.

But he came from a "closed" country, a sheltered environment, and when he arrived in America, he was mesmerized at how advanced this country was compared to the village where he came from. He tried to soak up as much as he could. To overcome the culture and language barrier he was suffering from, someone suggested he read the "highly acclaimed and prestigious New York Times," as the man put

it. It was hard at the beginning, but the more he read the better he got at it.

Almost his entire education came from reading the Times and after a few months, he realized something interesting. The newspaper primarily covers three countries vastly more than any other: the U.S., Russia and Israel. Clearly, he surmised, these must be the dominant countries of the world. Now, America and Russia he had heard of, as they were the two recognized superpowers, and he could understand why there was so much coverage on them. But what was Israel? He had never even heard of it back in China!

He took out a map and began scanning for this presumably large and important country. After a few failed attempts to locate it on the map, he made an "educated" guess that Israel was probably Canada, the large country on the northern border of the United States. Probably some people call it by its old name and some people call it by its new name. He never bothered to ask anyone or determine the real answer, so he simply accepted this as fact.

Time went on and after a while, he landed a job at the esteemed firm Lehman Brothers, then considered one of the largest investment banks in the United States. For the first time since his arrival in this country, he began to meet and mingle with all different types of people.

One day he met another worker, a religious Jew, and the two struck up a conversation. During the course of the conversation, the Jewish man mentioned that he had just come from Canada.

"Really? So tell me," asked the young Chinese, "when is this country called Canada and when is it called Israel?"

He was met with a strange look. He tried to reword the question but was met with an even stranger look. Realizing he was mistaken but not knowing exactly what his mistake was, he told the friendly Jewish man of his ordeal and why he concluded that Canada and

Israel were the same. If it was always in the news, it must be a large and populous country, no?



"Well," came the amused reply, "I can understand your thought process, but come let me show you where this 'world dominant country' actually lies on the map."

Ever the one to learn something new, the Chinese fellow followed the Jewish man to the nearest library where they obtained a large detailed map of the world. It had every country in a variety of colors. The Jewish fellow pointed towards the middle east and said, "Look really close. There it is."

Assuming he was pointing to Egypt, he was about to ask why was does it say Egypt on the map, instead of Israel, but he bit his tongue; this was becoming quite embarrassing. He was really not comprehending this whole matter.

The Jewish man seemed to pick up on that and pointed directly at a tiny smudge on the map, right off the Mediterranean Sea. "This is Israel," he smiled. "Go learn some Jewish history and then you'll understand why the world is busy with it."

Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

In memory of R' Shmuel Shmelka ben HaRav Moshe Kizelnik z"l

L' Maaseh...

When Rav Moshe Feinstein arrived in New York with his family, there was only one kosher bakery in the area. At the time, there was no organized kashrus vaad or similar governing body, and people relied on and trusted the owners.

The owner of this particular bakery was shomer Torah and mitzvos and seemed honest, but he wasn't learned and R' Moshe wasn't sure that he knew how to separate challah from the dough, or even that he should.

Not wanting to embarrass him or make him feel attacked, R' Moshe came up with an idea: He approached the baker and explained that it had been many years since his wife was able to bake herself and felt bad that she had missed being able to be mafrish challah so many times. They were wondering, therefore, if perhaps the rebetzin could come to the bakery and separate challah for them, as a way of making up for the missed opportunities.

This way, R' Moshe was able to enter into a conversation with the baker and ascertain that he really did know all he needed to know about hafrashas challah.

"A person who truly trusts in Hashem, is like a tree planted by the waterside: He does not fear when heat comes and is always green." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

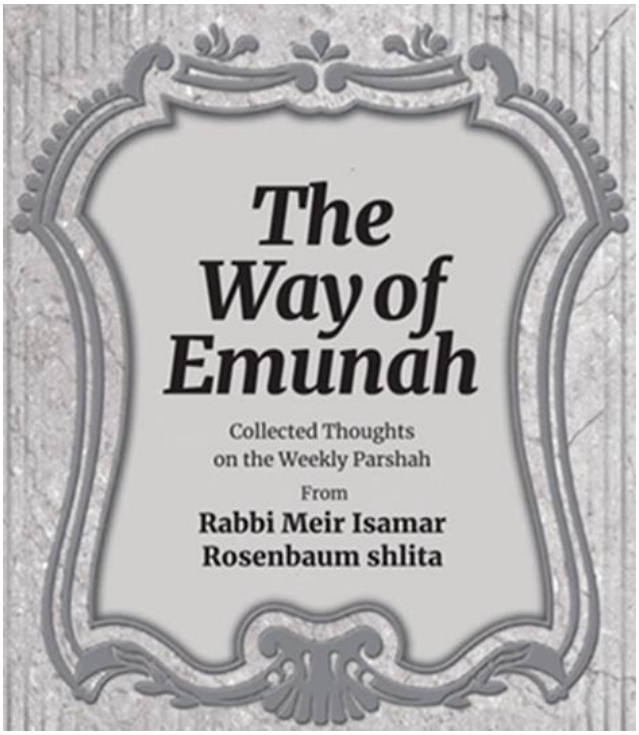


The Yalkut Shimoni notes that when Yehoshua wanted to prevent the sun from setting, he told it to be silent. Really, it should have made more sense to order it to stand still. However, Yehoshua knew that the sun's purpose in this world is to praise Hakadosh Boruch Hu, and as long as it does, it gains the energy it needs to function (ie rise, shine, set). By telling it to be quiet, Yehoshua cut it from its source of energy and therefore did not set.

We, explains **Rav Shimshon Pinkus**, also function very much in the same way. When we find things to thank Hashem for (and we should be looking for them if they are not obvious), we gain tremendous beracha in our lives which allow us to do so much more. The more time we spend singing His praises and thanking Him, the greater the sheaf of beracha we will merit to have.

In the sefer Ohel Boruch, it is related that the saintly Boruch Taam zt"l zy"a (Boruch Frankel Thumim (1760–1828) was sitting by a bris and was seen to smile for no apparent reason. Someone came over to him and asked him what he was smiling about, and he responded that he had just seen a vision of Gan Eden.

The man brazenly demanded that he would like to see it as well. In a benign way, the Boruch Taam answered him, "What's stopping you? Just answer Amein properly! For the Gemora in Sanhedrin (119b) promises that whoever answers Amein with all of his concentration "they open for him the gates of Paradise." ~ R' Moshe Meir Weiss



שְׁלַח לְךָ אֲנָשִׁים – '***Send for you men and let them scout the land of Canaan***.' (13:2)

● Sending the Meraglim Was For Moshe's Benefit

Rabenu Bechaya notes that the word "לְךָ" (for you) seems unnecessary, as it would suffice to just say to send men.

He answers that the word "for you" is used to indicate that sending the spies was for Moshe's benefit, as his life was lengthened as a result of this episode for the next 40 years, while the nation wandered in the desert.

It had been decreed that Moshe would not enter Eretz Yisroel, and if not for the meraglim's sin, the nation would have entered the land immediately and Moshe's life would have come to an end. Thus, this story lengthened his life by 40 years.

● Their Aveiros Made a Parshah in the Torah

Sefer Maaseh Tzadikim relates that one summer, **Rav Yaakov Aryeh of Radzimin zy"a** (author of Bikurei Aviv) went to visit the **Chidushei Harim zy"a**. The two of them had studied together under **Rav Boruch of Mezhibuz zy"a** and were close friends.

The Chidushei Harim noticed that Rav Yaakov Aryeh appeared exhausted, as if he were coming down with a fever. He asked him why he looked so wiped out. Was he sick or just tired?

Rav Yaakov Aryeh replied, "I'm not sick and I'm not tired. However, every year when the summertime arrives and we come to these Parshios, and we read about the sins committed by the great

generation of the midbar, I am greatly disturbed. This lofty generation witnessed amazing miracles and were spoken to directly by Hashem. How could they do these things? - These thoughts make me very upset and weak."

The Chidushei Harim told him, "What are you saying? Their aveiros were more valuable in Shomayim than all of our mitzvos. The proof of this is that their aveiros created entire Parshios in the Torah, but we don't know what our mitzvos accomplish!"

הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבַרְנוּ בָהּ לָתוּר אֹתָהּ טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד – '***The land that we passed through to scout it, the land is very, very good***. (14:7)

● Do Not Speak Badly About the Land



On the topic of speaking only positively about Eretz Yisroel, **Rav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim zy"a** related (Maamar Mordechai, Chelek 2) that the **Divrei Shmuel of Slonim zy"a** had in his possession the tobacco case that had belonged to the **Kalisker Rebbe zy"a**. He had a special affinity for this holy item, and he kept it near him at all times.

One day, the tobacco case went missing. A major search was undertaken and every nook and cranny of the house was checked, but it was not found. This loss caused the Divrei Shmuel much pain.

A long time later, a chasid of the Rebbe named R' Zelig Lieder found himself in the home of a close friend in Eretz Yisroel. While he was there, he noticed that the lost tobacco case was sitting on the

bookshelf. He discovered that this man had seen how much the Rebbe valued this holy item, and he greatly desired to have it. He could not overcome his desire, and he took it.

R' Zelig asked the man to give it to him so that he could return it to the Rebbe, and the man agreed. R' Zelig was overjoyed to have the opportunity to return the stolen object and bring joy to the Rebbe.

When he got back to Slonim, he went to the Rebbe, handed over the tobacco container, and told him how he had found it. To his surprise, the Rebbe refused to take it. He said, "If I were to take it, whenever you would see it by me, you would remember that a Jew from Eretz Yisroel sinned and stole it. This will cause you to think badly about a Jew from Eretz Yisroel!"

וַיַּשְׁכִּמוּ בַבֹּקֶר וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶל־רֹאשׁ־הָהָר לֵאמֹר הִנֵּנוּ וְעָלִינוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר ה' כִּי חָטָאנוּ – '***They arose early in the morning and ascended to the mountaintop, saying: We are ready to go up to the place of which Hashem spoke, for we have sinned.***" (14:40)

● The Meraglim Did Not do Teshuva

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy"a asks why Klal Yisroel was forgiven for the sin of the eigel hazahav, even though we don't find that they did teshuva, but they were not forgiven for the sin of the meraglim, even though they did do teshuva?

He answers that a person's main teshuva is when he loses all hope and he doesn't think he could ever atone for his sin. When a person becomes broken-hearted to this extent, he fully regrets what he did and accepts to only obey Hashem in the future. Thus, his actions show that he is sincere, and this teshuva is accepted.

After the sin of the eigel, Klal Yisroel did not know that teshuva would help, as this was the first sin they committed since they received the Torah. Therefore, they fully regrated their actions and had sincere remorse. After the sin of the meraglim, however, they

already knew that teshuva worked, so they thought they could simply do teshuva and move on. Thus, they did not have full remorse.

This was proven when the very next day they decided to climb the mountain, despite Moshe telling them that Hashem did not want them to. This was a sign that they had not done full teshuva and had not accepted to only do good from now on.



PARSHA THOUGHTS

By Mordechai Sapoznick *Flatbush*

L'zecher Nishmas Harav Chaim Leib Halevi Epstein ZT"L



The פָּסוּק says, "עֲלֹה נַעֲלֶה - We shall go up and conquer it." Rashi explains that Calev said that if Moshe commanded Bnei Yisroel to build ladders and go up to Shamayim, they would have done as Moshe commanded. Horav Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל asks why does Rashi use ladders as an example? If they had to go up to Shamayim, how would a ladder help them? He answers that it is to teach us that when one has to accomplish something, one has to try his best to do it, and he should do whatever he can do in order to accomplish it. And if one tries his best, then Hashem will come and help him succeed.

Dvar Torah from ספר טללי אורות



There was a Choshuveh Yid who moved from Poland to Eretz Yisroel. He was known that he would NEVER EVER speak bad about anything in Eretz Yisroel. Any fruit he would eat he would say, "Wow, there is nothing like the fruit of Eretz Yisroel!"

One time someone wanted to test him out and he brought a hot pepper and gave it to him, not telling him that it was sharp. This Tzaddik coming from Poland had never seen a hot pepper before. When this Tzaddik took one bite he screamed, "Ah Ah AZUS D'KEDUSHA! - In other word's the fellow failed in trying to get him to say a bad word about Eretz Yiroel!

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

Story Time!

Shmuel HaNagid was a vizier to the Caliph of Granada and leader of the Spanish-Jewish community. A Jewish man once bad-mouthed him and the Caliph, following accepted Muslim protocol, instructed R' Shmuel to personally "cut out that man's evil tongue."

R' Shmuel took the trembling man to his home and made him comfortable. He treated him as an honored guest and never mentioned the issue of his being insulted, nor did he take the opportunity to belittle the man for his affront.

Some time later, the Caliph called for the man to see that his order had been carried out. The man could not stop lavishing praise on Shmuel HaNagid for his wisdom, kindness and generosity. The Caliph

was incensed at R' Shmuel. "How dare you disobey me? I told you to cut out his tongue, yet he still speaks!"

R' Shmuel responded with typical insight, "Your eminence, you told me to cut out his "evil" tongue, and that's exactly what I have done. Do you not you see how this tongue only speaks with sweetness and love?"

TORAHANYTIMES NEWSLETTER

A Gift for the King for Morocco - Rabbi Ephraim Epstein



You might be familiar with the Reichman family from Canada. The Reichman's, a very well-to-do, are great benefactors and philanthropists. And although they come from Hungary, before that, they have they history in Morocco.

It therefore didn't come as too big a surprise when the King of Morocco held an extravagant birthday party and invited people from all over the world to attend the party, the Reichman's included. But this didn't make it any less uneasy. Many households struggle with that to get family members for their birthday. And if you can imagine that being a question when thinking about a family member, it's certainly a question when you're thinking about the King of Morocco.

Uncertain what to get, the Reichman's convened with the intent on reaching a consensus. In tossing around multiple ideas, they knew they wanted to create a Kiddush Hashem through their actions and likewise gift the King with something which honors him. After many days of discussing it and mulling it over, they decided.

The heralded day arrived and the Reichman's flew to Morocco and attended the birthday. There, individuals began getting up one by one and stating what they had chosen as the gift to honor the King. One announced, "We, the Country of Africa, pledge to his Highness an Ireland off the coast of Africa for his birthday." Another got up and declared, "We, the family from Britain, are giving a fleet of racehorses to his King, his Highness, for his birthday."

And then Mr. Reichman got up, sweating. With a sense of reverence and humility, he said, "We, the Reichman family from Toronto, Canada, humbly pledge to the King, his Highness, that we will build a beautiful Jewish school—a yeshiva—in the city of Fez, the largest Jewish community in Morocco, with his name on the school."

There was dead silence in the entire room. Mr. Reichman began sweating even more profusely, as the King began getting a little red. Grabbing the microphone, he screamed, "What are you crazy? You're going to build a Jewish school in Morocco? You think the future of the Jewish people is in Morocco? Build it in Israel! The future of the Jewish people is only in Israel!"

Visit the neighborhood of Talpiyot in Jerusalem today, you will see a Moroccan Jewish school built in honor of the King of Morocco.

"The first thing needed to fix this world is that Jews should love each other and be united. And this can begin even without a planning committee and without funding. It can begin with you." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson.



Modeh Ani - by Michael Winner

וְאוּלָם חַי־אָנִי וְיִמָּלֵא כְּבוֹד־ה' אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ - "***Nevertheless, as I (Hashem) live and as My Presence fills the whole world***" (Bamidbar 14:21).

Every morning we start off with saying "Modeh Ani": "I give thanks to You living and everlasting King for You have restored my soul with mercy. Great is Your faithfulness."

Commonly, we translate:

"Modeh Ani" - I give thanks

"Lefanecha," to you

"Melech Chai V'Kayam," "Living and Everlasting King."

It could be read and translated, slightly differently:

"Modeh" – I acknowledge

"Ani Lefanecha" – I am before you

"Melech Chai V'Kayam" – "Living and Everlasting King."

In the second translation, we are acknowledging that we are always walking before Hashem, the living King. Wherever He goes, wherever He wants us, we go with Him, for He is life itself. And when we are not walking before Him, we are not really alive.

I don't know. It just hit me that this corresponds to what we say in Tehillim (23:4) גַּם כִּי־אֵלֵךְ בְּגֵיא צַלְמָוֶת לֹא־אִירָא רָע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי - "***Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no harm, for You are with me***."

There's a profound difference between one who does mitzvos in order "to make Hashem happy" and one whose life is always with

Hashem. The first is much easier to do, obviously. He thanks Hashem for what he has been given and davens that it should continue, but his life is still not WITH Hashem. It's an employer/employee relationship.

However, when one changes his outlook in life and wishes a life WITH Hashem, then the entire relationship changes. He is constantly (as much as he could be) walking with Hashem, KNOWING that He is there with him.

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל

Wonders of Creation - The Polar Bear by Alex Isaacson



The title for the world's largest land carnivore goes to the polar bear. This Arctic animal weighs up to 1,500lbs and while it may be a land animal, it oddly spends more of its time at sea.

Polar bears can hunt their preferred food (seals) from the edge of sea ice, often living off fat reserves when no sea ice is present. But how does this massive mammal exist in such frigid temperatures, much less hunt in the freezing cold ocean?

Hashem gave them a special coat of fur, consisting of a layer of dense under-fur and an outer layer of guard hairs, which appear white or tan but are in actuality transparent. This unique hair can

measure up to six inches long atop the skin of a polar bear. This bear's skin is not white like many people assume, - it is black.

They have plenty of insulation - up to 4 inches of blubber. The polar bears are magnificent hunters. This is due to their supreme senses: the polar bear has an extremely well-developed sense of smell, being able to detect seals almost a mile away and buried under three feet of snow.

Lastly, the polar bear happens to be an excellent swimmer, with individuals having seen them in open Arctic waters as far as 200 miles from land. All of these astounding abilities make sense for their survival in the harsh and unforgiving conditions of the Arctic.

The Night the Rebbe Disappeared by Dr. Dovid Krinsky





One evening, the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe's wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, called 770, as she often would, to speak with the Rebbe. The Rebbe often worked late, but on this occasion the secretary who answered informed her that he had left some time before, and was not in 770 anymore.

Now, it doesn't take much time to get from 770 to the Rebbe's house; it was long past when the Rebbe should have arrived home. Calls began to go back and forth. Nobody, not even the Rebbetzin, knew where he was; it was like the Rebbe had disappeared. Nor did anybody know the whereabouts of his car, or of Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, the Rebbe's secretary who would normally drive him.

Word got out, and before long, a crowd of concerned people began to form in front of the Rebbe's house. They were debating among themselves, wondering what to do, when all of a sudden the Rebbe's car pulled up. He got out, smiled to the chasidim as he often would, went up the stairs, and closed the door. The Rebbe had disappeared, and nobody knew where or why — only that he was back. For a couple of hours, there were only three people in the world who knew, and I was one of them.

Several years ago, when Rabbi Krinsky, who is my uncle, was sitting shiva after the passing of his wife, I visited him to give my consolations. While I was sitting with him, a certain man was escorted in through the crowd and seated right in front of my uncle. My uncle then introduced me to him as "the Rebbe's dentist."

Hearing this description for the first time surprised me. True, it was with the Rebbe's encouragement that I had practiced and taught dentistry for years, and that he had pushed me to accept a particular position on the faculty of Columbia Dental School. But I hadn't felt free to mention to anyone that the Rebbe also had a more direct connection with my dentistry. Only after hearing my uncle say this publicly did I feel comfortable telling this story.

It was probably in the early 1980s when Rabbi Krinsky called me one day to say that the Rebbe needed a certain dental procedure. This was already uncommon. Normally, patients don't call requesting a specific treatment.

"Are we certain that's what he needs?" Yes, he replied. That was what the Rebbe had told him. Rabbi Krinsky wanted to know whether

it could be done right away, in my Boro Park office, with no other staff assisting, or anyone else present. There were some logistics to be worked out, but the answer was yes.

There were also some other considerations. Since the Rebbe had sustained a heart attack in 1977, he had been advised to avoid certain medications, including one commonly used in dentistry, and so I was asked to avoid it as well. As it happened, I had been spending years trying to educate physicians that the amount of this particular substance that we use is so slight that it wouldn't be a problem.

So, I called the Rebbe's cardiologist in Chicago, Dr. Ira Weiss, but I got myself educated in turn. He explained that there is a certain variation of a heart condition in which even tiny amounts of this medication could have a deleterious effect on the heart.

Next, the Rebbe directed that we did not have to use anesthesia. In forty-five years of practice, several patients have asked to have this same procedure done without dental anesthetic and I've refused all of them, even when they insisted that they could tolerate the pain: "Maybe you can take it, but I can't," I told them.

"But the Rebbe said to do it without anesthesia," insisted Rabbi Krinsky. I figured I would talk to the Rebbe about it when he came.

The third consideration was financial. The Rebbe instructed that I must receive payment. That was a tough one; how could I bill the Rebbe? The standard fee for the procedure at that time was 20 dollars, so after much thought, I decided to tell him that his fee was 10 dollars; at least I wouldn't be charging in full.

When the Rebbe came in, a few hours after we closed the office, everything went smoothly. After seating and examining him, I saw that the procedure was, in fact, exactly what he needed. I also saw that his procedure would not be difficult for him and could even be done without anesthesia. This was the only instance I have ever seen where this was the case, but the Rebbe had known it in advance.

I finished, the Rebbe got off the chair, and we began walking back toward the reception area. As we did, the Rebbe asked me, slowly, in English, how I had evaluated the difficulty of the procedure, and how much he owed me.

"It was actually easier than I expected, and the charge is 10 dollars," I replied, as I had decided earlier. The Rebbe continued to engage me in conversation — about superficial things like my family or my job — while he took out some bills from his pocket. He thumbed through some singles, some fives, some tens, and then handed me a twenty. I didn't want to take it from him, and tried to find a gap in the conversation to say so, but it wasn't there; the Rebbe had already moved on to the next subject. I also didn't want him to stand holding his hand out, so I took the bill.



"But Rebbe," I finally got in. "This is not the right amount."

"That was your evaluation," he explained. "This is my evaluation."

Rabbi Krinsky then came in to drive the Rebbe home.

The experience was a little surreal for me; I hadn't been nervous, but it felt like it had all happened in a different reality.

As to why the Rebbe's disappearance became such a mystery: The Rebbe and the Rebbetzin were in the habit of trying not to worry each other, and so he simply hadn't told her, or anyone else, that he was going to the dentist!

A Siddur from Heaven



Many shuls in Eretz Yisrael have the woman's balcony hovering the men section. One lady had her siddur on the ledge of the balcony when her rowdy son came and pushed it over the ledge.

You can understand that she was devastated to see her siddur flying into the men's section, but as there was still more to the davening, she headed to the sefarim shank to get another one and waited for the end to go retrieve her siddur back.

After davening, she went downstairs to reclaim her siddur. When she located the person who'd found it after it dropped, she noticed that the finder seemed very emotional. She expressed her remorse for bringing her child, who had shoved the siddur down and caused it to fall to the men's section.

But the man consoled her and told her that he wasn't bothered by that. "I am from Tzefas," he began, "and recently I became a ba'al teshuva. Tonight was my very first-time attending shul. Understandably, I had mixed emotions. On the one hand, I was overjoyed to speak with Hashem, and this was my very first time doing so in a public setting. On the other hand, I was concerned attending a new crowd. I've never met these people, and I was worried as to how they would take to me.

"The last several months, I've been avoiding shul out of embarrassment, but now, with the Pesach motivation, a time of renewal brought me to shul. "When I came to shul, I was faced with my first dilemma. I'd come late and couldn't find a siddur. Sitting through Maariv without a siddur wasn't something I was looking forward to on my first time in shul. No one likes to be without a siddur, and it's especially embarrassing for a newcomer.

"Ashamed, I snuck to the back, quietly hoping no one would notice me. I told Hashem, 'If You really desire my davening, please show me outright that my davening is worthwhile. Show me that You want it.'

"As I was sitting down siddur-less, I heard a loud bang. In front of my nose, a magnificent leatherbound siddur landed on the table. It was custom orchestrated by Hashem, showing me how my davening is wanted and treasured. I perceived Hashem's lesson, and it's left a deep impact on me and my attitude toward davening and avodas Hashem. This direct message of appreciation has left me gratefully in debt to Hashem and His mitzvos.

"Therefore, now that you know what that siddur's done for me, you can understand why there is nothing to apologize for. You were the one chosen to awaken this awareness and bring forth this connection between me and Hashem."

Minyan for Women

The question has been asked why women cannot be included in making a minyan?

The answer is based on the gemara in Megilla 23b which derives from the Meraglim, spies that a minyan is comprised of ten people since there were ten evil spies (excluding Yehoshua and Kalev).

Since the women did not participate in the sin of the spies, they are not included in a minyan, because they don't need the rectification for the sin of the spies.

"The more we recognize Hashem's daily blessings, the more goodness He sends us. Every 'Thank You' is like offering a Korban Todah in the Beis Hamikdash." - ~Tehillim Rabbah.

The Bulletproof Vest by R' Eli Mansour





There was a yeshiva bochur in Israel. He came down with a serious illness, and he needed treatment. He was going to have to visit the hospital from time to time to get this treatment. When he came to the hospital for the first of his treatments, of course, everything must be sterile in the hospital. He has to put on a sterile gown etc.

He knew this, so he purchased a brand-new pair of Tzitzis, which he assuming that it would be sterile enough that the hospital would let him wear it while he is going through this procedure.

He got to the hospital and the nurse told him, "Okay, you're going to go in for treatment now. You have to take off everything and just put on this robe."

He said, "What about my Tzitzis, they are brand new, can I wear them on top of the gown?"

"I'm sorry, but you can't wear them as they are not sterile."

He said, "This is a religious item, and I'm not taking it off. I can't take off my Tzitzis."

"You have to take it off, it's not sterile, and it's against the hospital rules."

"I'm not taking it off."

She says, "Ok, when you decide to take it off, then we can proceed with your treatment. In the meantime, sit in the waiting area in the corridor."- And the nurse walks away.

He's just sitting there outside the treatment room with his Tzitzis on just waiting.

He sat there for three hours!

Finally, one of the head doctors walks through the corridor. He sees this kid sitting there, and he says, "What are you doing over there?"

He says, "They told me that I can't wear my Tzitzis for the operation, and I have to wait here. I've been waiting for over three hours now. I have to wear my Tzitzis as it is a protection for me."



The irreligious doctor said, "Let me go and find out what's going on here. I'll be back in a few minutes."

He goes into the clinic and talks to the nurses to see what's going on. He reviews the scans and X-rays, and when he comes out, his face is white! He's shocked.

He says, "Okay, you can wear your Tzitzis. Just go in now."

The boy asked, "Doctor, what just happened?"

"I'll tell you after the treatment."

He goes into the treatment room wearing his Tzitzis, and they proceed with the procedure.

When the boy comes out from the recovery room, the doctor says to him, "The nurses over here made a grave mistake. The treatment that they were going to give you, would have killed you. They made an error. Because you were wearing your Tzitzis, you religious people – your G-d loves you! – You were steadfast to wear your Tzitzis, and due to the delay, the error was identified which saved your life! If you would have gone in there straight away, you wouldn't be alive right now! This garment that you are wearing – I don't know what it is, and I don't know what it means, but it saved your life!"

Tzitzis -This is holiness. This is kedusha. Who would deprive himself of this mitzva? You hear people being so petty when it comes to the summer months and it is hot outside – "I can't wear it, it's too hot."

What does he mean by "It's too hot"? Does a police officer ever say, "It's too hot, I'm taking off my bullet proof vest?"

Never underestimate the power of Tzitzis!



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

שְׁלַח לְךָ֣ אֲנָשִׁים וְיָתֻ֗רוּ אֶת־אֶ֙רֶץ כְּנַ֔עַן (13:2) '***Send*** (**שלח לך**) ***men who will scout the Land of Canaan***.'

Behold, the word **לך** is superfluous, and therefore Rashi explained in the name of the Midrash that Hashem said to Moshe: **שלח לך** – Send according to your mind. I am not commanding you, but if you wish, you may send.

But we can also explain it according to another Midrash which says that the spies sinned because they were afraid that once they entered Eretz Yisrael others would be appointed as leaders in their place. From this we see that they were arrogant and pursued honor.

Moshe only made sure that they were tzaddikim but did not check to see if they were arrogant, but Hashem's main criteria was that they should be humble and not pursue honor.

This is what the posuk is saying: "Send לך men" – men that will be similar to you, humble and hating honor like yourself. This in fact could be what Rashi meant when he explained that the word לך means "according to your mind" – that they should all be of the same mindset as you.

Rabbi Hillel Danziger

In 1919, Israel experienced a snowstorm the likes of which none of its inhabitants had ever seen. The storm continued for three days and covered the city with three feet of snow, making it extremely hazardous to travel outdoors since it was impossible to tell where the sidewalks ended and the streets began, where low walls or fences might be hidden beneath the snow, and worst of all was the danger of falling into one of the many wells and open pits scattered throughout the city.

On the final day of the snowstorm, one particular Rabbi was invited to serve as the mohel at the bris of one of the children in Meah She'arim. Early that morning, when the streets were entirely deserted, the residents of the neighborhood were startled by a strange apparition - they saw what seemed to be an old man making his way through an immense field of snow.

When the figure drew near enough to be observed more clearly, the onlookers were astonished to see it was their venerable seventy-year-old Rav. Immediately word spread from house to house that the Rav had made his way through the blizzard to attend the bris milah.

One of the Rav's grandsons ran through the snow to the home of the bris to greet his grandfather and asked him how he could risk

his life rather than let another mohel - one nearby - perform the bris instead.

The Rav explained, "On the contrary, it was precisely because of the danger of traveling today that I feared the bris might be postponed since they would certainly wait for me. As a result, the local mohelim would be hesitant to infringe on my rights, and they would therefore justify their reluctance to travel through the snow. In the end, everyone would have a good excuse for not coming, and no bris would take place today - therefore, I picked myself up and Baruch Hashem I arrived here safely.

The sagely grandfather was none other than **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**, the Tzaddik of Jerusalem.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner



It was early Shabbos afternoon and Moshe Chaim Singer* decided to *daven Minchah* in the middle of the day as opposed to at the end. A number of variables went into his reasoning and knowing that there were two *Minchah minyonim* at the nearby shul – one at 1.00 and the other at 2.00 – he readied himself to leave. When he realised that he would be late for the first *minyan*, Moshe Chaim chose to wait for the second and left his home with time to spare.

The street was basically empty at that time of the day. Most people were still sitting and enjoying their Shabbos *seudos.* A mere trickle of men was walking in the direction of the shul. Moshe Chaim reached the shul a minute later, walked inside and went over to a seat. *Minchah* was only scheduled to start in a few minutes, so he picked up a *sefer* while he waited. As the hands of the clock ticked their way to two o'clock, a few more men entered the shul, and as the big hand hit the hour, one of the assembled approached the *amud,* opened the *Siddur* and began *Ashrei.*

Everyone got busy with their own *davening* and shortly after were cresting *Uva L'Tzion* and moving towards *krias haTorah.*

There, they ran into a snag. The *aron hakodesh* was locked.

This was very strange, as there had been a *minyan* in the shul just a short while earlier that had clearly used the *sefer Torah* and they definitely knew about this *minyan* that was going to need to *lein* as well. Yet the *aron hakodesh* was now locked.

This should not have been much of a problem because the *gabbo'im* usually made sure that at least one or two people had the key at every *minyan.* They looked towards one of the regular 'key people,' but he shrugged helplessly and admitted that he didn't have the key with him. They then turned in the direction of another 'key person.' He checked his pockets and was forced to admit that he had no key, either. - They were stuck.

Neither of the 'key people' lived that close, and because most people who *daven* at an early *Minchah* on Shabbos are the type who have a schedule and like to get things, like *Minchah,* done, one could understand that this situation was making everyone unhappy. - Now what?

Everyone looked at each other, nobody sure of what to do. It was then that the *Rosh Yeshivah* of a nearby yeshivah, who was *davening* with them, spoke up. His *davening* at this minyan on Shabbos was

actually somewhat of a rarity, due to the fact that he usually *davened* with his yeshivah.

"Rabbosai," he said, "I have an idea." - Everyone turned to look in his direction.

"Since we have no way of opening the *aron hakodesh,* why don't we move over to the yeshivah building instead? It's an off-Shabbos this week and the *bachurim* aren't there, but I have the key to the *aron hakodesh* in my *beis medrash* and I can't think of a better solution to the problem at hand."

With everyone's agreement, the *olam* followed the *Rosh Yeshivah* out of the door and down the street in the direction of the Yeshivah.

The building exuded the lonely feeling of a deserted domicile. Where one normally heard the sound of boys calling to one another on the stairs and laughter in the hallways, all was still and silent. It didn't feel right, but that's the way a yeshivah is on an off-Shabbos.

They walked up the stairs to the *beis medrash* and entered the cavernous room. Rows of *shtenders* stood at attention like soldiers preparing for battle. Most were bare, though here and there a *bochur* had left his *Gemorah* in place – ready and waiting for his return. The members of our *minyan* dispersed throughout the larger space while the *chazzan* made his way to the *amud* and chanted the opening lines of *Vayehi binsoa ha'Aron.* The *Rosh Yeshivah* approached the *aron hakodesh* to unlock the doors.

Sliding the tall doors open, he peered inside the velvet-lined interior and chose a *sefer Torah* from within. He seemed taken aback for a moment, as if a thought had suddenly occurred to him and he was unsure what to do about it. He then passed the *sefer Torah* to the *chazzan,* who carried it to the *bimah,* for the requisite three *aliyos.*

From there, events moved in their usual fashion. Three members of the *minyan* were called up for *Aliyos,* someone else was honoured

with *hagbahah,* another with *gelilah,* and then the *chazzan* lifted the *sefer Torah* and returned it to the *aron hakodesh*

Moments later, they were all engrossed in the silent *Shemoneh Esrei* of Shabbos afternoon.

When *davening* was over, the members of the *minyan* began moving in the direction of the exit, but they were stopped by the *Rosh Yeshivah.*

"Rabbosai," he said, "wait, I have to tell you something.

Stopping in their places, they looked at him curiously.

"You all saw something happen at the other shul that seldom, if ever, happens. Can any of you recall ever *davening* at a *minyan* at that shul and finding the *aron kodes*h locked?" - No one could.

"I was very surprised too, but I told myself that mistakes happen. I then had the idea to move us over to my yeshivah. But it was only when I opened the a*ron hakodesh* that I realised something."

He paused, looking around at his audience.

"My friends, when I opened the doors of the *aron hakodesh* and took a look at the *sifrei Torah* within, I realised that one was dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Avraham Goldberg, *Hashem yinkom damo,* who was murdered in the Har Nof attack [**כ״א חשון תשע״ה**]. At the same time, I also remembered that his *yahrtzeit* – and the *yahrtzeit* of the attack – is today! Yes, Reb Avraham was killed *al kiddush Hashem* five years ago to the day, and it seems we were sent to the yeshivah to read from his *sefer Torah* on the day of his *yahrtzeit!*"

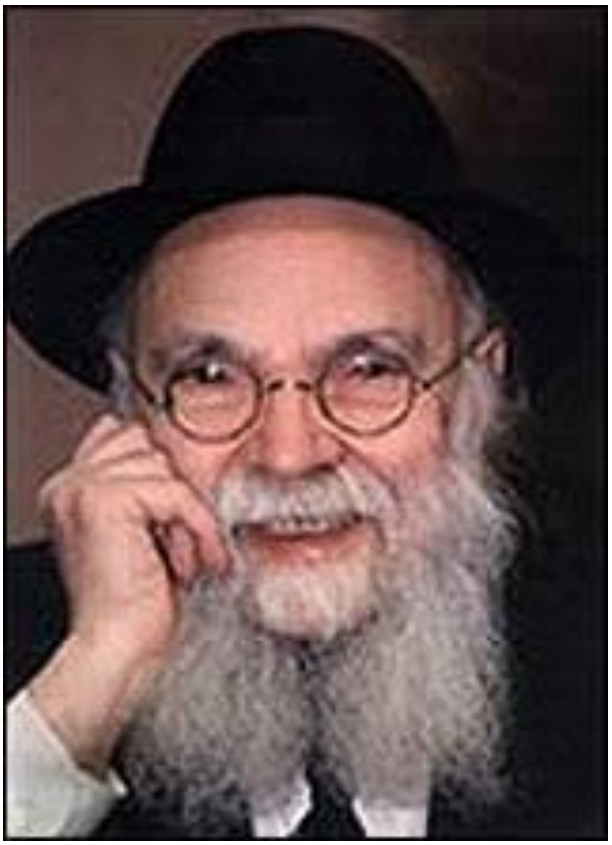
The *mispallim* left the yeshivah building speechless, and in awe of what had just transpired.

Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

The Mistake of the Spies



In this week's Parsha, we learn about the mission of the spies. They were charged to spy out the land of Eretz Yisroel. Despite being great individuals, the spies failed miserably. They gave a false and negative report of the land. How did they make such a mistake? They were such great people!

I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita, that **Rav Chanoch Henoch of Alexander** teaches us something so important – a lesson for life. He says that *Shlach Lecha* means that if you're in the service of Hashem, if you're on a mission, you have to be G-d centered and not self-centered. If you're working for Hashem, you're not working for yourself. *Shlach Lecha* – send forth that part of you that's all about you, and work for Hashem. You can't think about yourself, about your stature, and reputation. You have to think about Hashem.

The spies fell short of doing this. They were too much into themselves and therefore they messed up. Rav Chanoch Henech of Alexander is teaching us that as much as we have to believe in ourselves, we have to believe more in Hashem. We have to understand that sometimes there's a part of us that gets in the way.

One night, a man named Tzemach was leaving Yeshivas Torah Voddath when he noticed his friend Avraham, who was learning at a

different yeshiva, leaving the building. Tzemach called out, "Good night, Avraham." - **Rav Avraham Pam zt"l**, the Rosh Yeshiva and great Gadol, who was leaving the building at the same time, turned around and said, "Good night" to Tzemach.

The next day, Tzemach apologized to Rav Pam and explained that he had called out to someone else named Avraham. Rav Pam assured him that he did nothing wrong and, seeing that Tzemach felt bad, invited him to join him for a Shabbos meal. This is the reaction of someone who spent a lifetime in service of Hashem, and not just focusing on his own personal needs.

Yeshivas Bircas Hatorah
ישיבת ברכת התורה

Have No Fear by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

This week's Parsha opens with the episode of the Jewish people requesting of Moshe to send out emissaries to discover the nature of the land that they were to be entering. The Torah goes on to delineate the punishment that was meted out to the Jews for this grave sin.

Why should the Jewish people be punished for sending out spies, as this is a completely normal and reasonable activity for any nation that wishes to conquer a land?

Secondly, Moshe and Joshua themselves each in turn sent out spies to ascertain the nature of the lands that they were to be conquering and we don't find any mention of wrongdoing by these great people. Moreover, we find that the spies were punished for reporting that they found giant people in the land, yet this was an

accurate report as Moshe Rabenu himself testifies later on in Sefer Devarim!

In truth, the **Ramban** deals with these difficulties and he asserts that while it is true that sending scouts to scope out the land is a normal activity, for the Jews who had just witnessed the great miracles which Hashem performed for them on the way out of Egypt, and continued to be privy to daily miracles, this was a demonstration of a lack of faith on their part.

Although the scouts' testimony about the land was accurate, their entire approach was based on a faulty premise – that Israel is a normal land. Based on the fantastic miracles which they had witnessed, they should have been aware of the fact that their entering into and existence in Israel was to be completely miraculous and not based on nature.

One interesting concept that emerges from this Ramban is that although it is certainly acceptable and even required to perform the necessary 'Hishtadlus' in our lives, doing more than is necessary for each and every individual's level is culpable for lack of faith in Hashem.

The Rabenu Bachaya on this week's Parsha discusses the sin of the spies as stemming from fear. He asserts that the emotion of fear itself is a denial of Hashem on a certain level, and evidences a lack of Bitachon in Hashem. Anyone who experiences this emotion is therefore to be held culpable.

We can see this point further illustrated through the emphasis which the Torah places on the fact the spies cried on the night that they returned. Why was this crying punished so severely by Hashem?

If one were to analyze the anatomy of a cry, one would realize that crying emanates from a fundamental feeling of hopelessness. One cries because they feel that they cannot continue under the present

circumstances. This being true, there is no greater demonstration of lack of Bitachon in Hashem then a cry which is generated from utter despair.

Incidentally, I found in my father's private journal after he passed away that he had accepted upon himself at a certain point never to be afraid or experience the sensation of fear for the rest of his life. He continued by writing, "How can I be afraid when I have such a powerful father in Heaven who is always looking out for me".

I would like to conclude with a story that **R' Moshe Shapiro** brings down about the **Brisker Rav**. He says that during WWII while the bombs were falling all around the city, and there was considerable confusion, the Rav would go around to each of the families attempting to help wherever he could. It happened one day that a bomb fell in the Rav's vicinity and he responded by getting down on the floor with a peaceful look on his face and proclaiming that his obligation now is to actively trust in Hashem with all of his might.

May we merit to vanquish all fear and despair from our heart and trust in Hashem!

In Pursuit of Honour

This week's Parsha discusses the tragic episode of the spies that were sent out as emissaries on behalf of the Jewish people in order to survey the land and determine whether or not they felt they could competently triumph over the local inhabitants.

The Torah informs us how these spies treacherously planned on undermining Hashem's campaign of bringing the Jewish people into the land of Israel, and falsified their reports about the land in order to instil fear in the Jewish people and dissuade them from heeding Hashem's command to enter into the land.

In order to appreciate the gravity of what we are about to ask, we need to properly understand who these spies were. According to

Rashi, each of the twelve spies were the leaders of their tribes and according to the **Ramban**, they were listed in order of their greatness. This means that Yehoshua and Kalev, who were listed third and fifth, were not even the greatest of the spies, yet they returned with a positive report about the land.

This being said, how could these giants in Torah study and good character traits have stooped to the level in which each one of them unanimously rebelled against Hashem and tried to convince the entire Jewish people to go along with them? Weren't they aware of all the miracles Hashem had performed for them from the time they left Egypt up until that moment? Was it so hard to believe that Hashem could successfully bring them into the land? They even reached the point where their report convinced the Jewish people to try to murder Yehoshua and Kalev!

The Mesillas Yesharim (11) cites the **Zohar** which says that the twelve princes of each of the tribes were concerned that they may be stripped of their positions, and new leaders would be appointed in their place. This fear apparently generated a feeling of resentment and caused the princes to feel resistance when they were commanded to enter into the land. This resistance became so strong, that it apparently completely overtook their intellect and caused them to do all the terrible things that we mentioned previously.

Chazal teach us that the pursuit of honor will bring a person out of the world. Look how true it is. These ten spies were the leaders of their generation, most probably endowed with all the great qualities that we look toward in our Gedolim today. Yet they began pursuing honor and it not only destroyed their lives, but it caused the entire Jewish people to be eradicated in the desert. Needless to say how it behooves us to distance ourselves from this terrible trait!

R' Chaim Shmuelevitz expounds on the folly of one who pursues honor and gives us practical advice how to overcome it. He explains

that in order to understand how irrational the pursuit of honor is, look toward Haman. Haman decreed and successfully implemented a law in his time that every human being in the known world was required to bow down to him when he entered into their presence. This means that there were six billion people around the world bowing down to him. - The one person who wasn't was Mordechai.

Any sane person would sit back and enjoy his achievements and live a really good life. But Haman could not do this. Haman exclaimed in anger, "Nothing I have is worth anything when I see Mordechai sitting there in the courtyard of the king and not bowing down to me." This irrational conduct is the fate that one can hope for if he begins to pursue honor.

R' Chaim goes on to explain that the way to attempt to retaliate against this ugly trait is to begin by fostering a proper outlook about what honor is. A person must understand that honor is a completely imaginary pleasure, with no relationship to the real universe which we occupy. A person's honor does not reflect his achievements in any way. All the honor in the world will not change what he has done and what he hasn't done.

We find many people who have great accomplishments under their belt, yet died penniless, completely unrecognized. On the flip side, we have seen many people who have done nothing at all, and yet have been awarded boundless honor. When a person understands that there is no correlation between a person's accomplishments, and the honor he receives, he will certainly be less likely to pursue such a counterfeit and ephemeral pleasure.

R' Chaim once related a story which portrays how non-authentic the sensation of honor can be. R' Chaim's mentor and mashgiach, **R' Yerucham** once received a letter from abroad in which a former student related how he told over a shiur from "R' Chaim" and how mesmerized the audience was from this Shiur. R' Yerucham read this letter to R' Chaim Shmuelevitz with eyes brimming with tears from

the satisfaction he got that his student R' Chaim was able to generate such inspirational Torah which was now being passed on to the next generation.

Now R' Chaim knew that this student was not referring to him, but was actually referring to **R' Chaim Brisker**, and this student had no intention whatsoever of praising R' Chaim Shmuelevitz. R' Chaim related that nevertheless, he couldn't help feeling a great sense of satisfaction and pleasure out of the honor he was receiving from R' Yerucham. - R' Chaim used this story to help his students understand the folly of one who pursues honor.

May we all merit to distance ourselves from the debilitating trait of honor, yet be careful to always display the proper honor to our peers!

The Gift & Power of Sight

This week's Parsha deals with the wonderful and unique commandment of Tzitzis. The Gemorah teaches us that this particular Mitzvah is so special that its value is equal to all the other 612 commandments combined.

One of the interesting lessons that we can learn from this extraordinary Mitzvah is the importance of the gift of sight, and to what extent what we look at can affect our entire spiritual growth.

The verse commands us to look at our Tzitzis, and by doing so, to remember all of the commandments in the Torah. The Gemorah in Menachos explains that this verse is testifying that merely gazing at our Tzitzis has the ability to remind us of all 612 Mitzvos and aid us in keeping them properly. Rashi adds that by looking at the blue Techeles which was then located in the Tzitzis strings, one was reminded of the Holy Throne in the Heavens, and ultimately who sits on that Throne. Furthermore, the Torah tells us that by glancing at our Tzitzis, we will be successful in not following our hearts and sinning. Rashi comments that every sin begins with the eyes. The

eyes must first take in the data which is in front of a person, only then can the heart desire that sin, and ultimately the body carries out the will of the heart. But a person can counteract this negative sequence of events by interrupting them with a quick glance at his Tzitzis. All of these points show us to what extent gazing at something can affect our inner being.

The Babba Sali testified about himself that his miraculous ability to gaze piercingly into all those who came to seek his advice, and know everything that was happening inside their soul, could only be attributed to his extreme caution to never look at anything which lacked holiness. In fact, Chazal warn us to only look at righteous people, and never at wicked ones, because by only looking at those holy people, we somehow inculcate their holiness into our being, and it affects us on a deep level.

The Steipler Gaon would advise his students to never abuse their gift of sight on anything unholy, even to read a newspaper which contains heresy, and he would tell them that if they did such a seemingly minor act, it could have a detrimental affect on them even ten years down the road.

The Gemorah in Menachos says that there is a process in which the Tzitzis will remind a person of Hashem. The Gemorah says that the blue color in the fringes will remind a person of the sea, and the sea will remind a person of the sky, and the sky will get a person to consider the throne of glory, and Rashi comments that a person will in turn consider who sits on that throne.

This Gemorah seems very strange. It seems like such a far-fetched process. How is a person expected to contemplate on all those steps when he is presented with a very real temptation by his worst foe – the evil inclination? Surely the Torah could have devised a more realistic defense!

R' Chaim Friedlander gives an example of a woman who was married to a man who she was deeply in love with, and that man passes away.

Everywhere she looks, she will be reminded of her dear husband. Very often, such a woman will feel compelled to move, because she can't bear to continue being constantly reminded of her pain. Each and every item in their joint domicile carries with it the memory of her spouse. Such is true about our relationship with the Master of the world. If our belief in Him is on the level that it should be, everywhere we look we are reminded of Him, because each item on this earth was created by Him, and could not continue to exist without Him. This principle is referred to by David in Psalms with the verse, "**שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד**" – "I see Hashem in front of me constantly". This type of attitude is incumbent upon every Jew to foster in order to properly observe the Torah.

The Sabba from Kelm used to explain that a person's belief in Hashem must literally be like his sense of sight. Meaning a person is obligated to be as sure of Hashem's existence as he is about something he sees right in front of his face. The way to properly fulfill the above quoted verse in Tehilim. We must see Hashem in everything that occurs in the world. The only way to transform one's belief into the type which is similar to the sense of sight, is to literally see Hashem's hand in every event, and every creature on this earth.

I would just like to conclude with a short biography of R' Chazkal Levenstein. R' Chazkal said about himself that he literally saw the exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Sea, and the Torah being given at Sinai on a constant basis in front of his eyes, and there was never a time in his life that he wasn't keenly aware of these events. Furthermore, he saw Hashem in every aspect of the creation and nature and this consciousness helped him to achieve all of the spiritual goals that he had set for himself.

May we all merit to see only good things, and to see Hashem in all that we do!

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Making His Name Great

In *Parshas Shelach*, after the *meraglim* returned from their mission to spy out *Eretz Yisroel*, we read some terrifying and ominous words – a threat from Hakodosh Boruch Hu. A threat of annihilation directed at the entire nation. And if that threat had been executed, we wouldn't be sitting here tonight. No doubt there would be an Am Hashem, but it would not have been us.

When the spies came back from their venture into *Eretz Yisroel* and sowed fear among the people – so much so that many wanted to turn around and make their way back to *Mitzrayim* – so Hakodosh Boruch Hu had enough: **עַד אָנָה יְנַאֲצֵנִי הָעָם הַזֶּה** – "*How much longer will this people vex Me*?!" "It's too many times already that they have provoked Me," Hashem said, and He therefore made a proposal to Moshe Rabeinu, an opportunity for a new beginning.

אַכֶּנּוּ בַדֶּבֶר וְאוֹרִשֶׁנּוּ – "*Let Me smite this nation with a plague and I'll wipe them out completely.* And how will I fulfill My promise to Avraham that his children will become a great nation? **וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אֹתְךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל** – Through you, Moshe – *I will make you a great nation.*"

● An Offer You Can't Refuse

Moshe was offered that the entire nation forever, would be the nation of Moshe Rabeinu. Now, I'll just make one note before we go on. This you have to know, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu *never intended* to destroy the Jewish people. He knew the outcome; He knew what would be in the end. But as far as Moshe Rabeinu was concerned, he was being given the biggest opportunity of his life – to rebuild the Am Yisroel from scratch; to create a nation for Hashem that wouldn't provoke Hashem again, a nation that would be founded by the *Ish Ha'Elokim* and on the ideals of that great man.

That's a remarkable opportunity for a man of greatness, that from his seed a new Am Yisroel would come to life. The eternal people would always look back to Moshe Rabeinu as the father of their nation and for Moshe that would be a glory unequaled – a tremendous honor forever and ever.

● What Will The Goyim Say?

Let's listen in on Moshe Rabeinu's response to this great proposition. Because Moshe *didn't* accept the offer; he said no. And there's a tremendous lesson in that refusal because from Moshe Rabeinu's response to Hashem we learn one of the most important purposes of the Am Yisroel – the function of each one of us in this world.

Moshe said to Hashem: **וְשָׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי הֶעֱלִיתָ בְכֹחֲךָ אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה מִקִּרְבּוֹ... וְהֵמַתָּה אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה** – "*When the Egyptians from whose midst You, in Your power, brought up these people, will hear that You have now destroyed them* so they will say, **מִבִּלְתִּי יְכֹלֶת ה' לְהָבִיא אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָהֶם** – it's because when they began to approach the land of *Cana'an* and Hashem saw how fortified the land was, how difficult it was to conquer all those nations, so He backed out. He saw that it was *k'viyachol* too much for Him, *chas v'shalom*, and therefore in order to be free from His promise, He destroyed His people." The name of Hashem will be blemished in the eyes of man, and therefore, said Moshe Rabeinu, the Am Yisroel must remain alive.

Moshe Rabeinu at that time proposed a principle of *kavod shamayim* – of being concerned with bringing honor to the name of Hashem. And anything that might in any way detract from that, Moshe Rabeinu wanted no part of. It's the honor of Hashem that the *Am Yisroel* should be allowed to survive because we represent His promise in this world. **וְעַתָּה יִגְדַּל נָא כֹּחַ הַשֵּׁם** – *Let Your power become increased now*, Moshe said. When everyone will see that despite whatever we have done, You're still willing to forgive us. By means of that, **יִגְדַּל נָא כֹּחַ הַשֵּׁם**, there will be a greater honor for Hashem.

With these words Moshe Rabeinu established a reason for the Am Yisroel to exist forever. He said to Hashem, "Our function in this world is, and always will be, to bring glory to Your name. *K'vod Shomayim* – that's the purpose of the Am Yisroel, and therefore let us live, and forever we will dedicate our lives to making Your name great in this world."

Hakodosh Boruch Hu took Moshe Rabeinu up on his offer: **וַיֹּאמֶר הַשֵּׁם סָלַחְתִּי כִּדְבָרֶךָ** – "I forgive the Am Yisroel *as you have spoken*. If that will be the function of this people, to bring Me honor always, then I will let them live." And so, the most important outcome that resulted from this whole story is the principle of *kavod Hashem*, the honor of Hashem – because when Moshe Rabeinu gained a promise from Hashem to maintain us forever as His nation, it was only with the assumption that we're going to honor Him forever.

Every observant Jew must feel it's his or her obligation to cause a good name for Hakodosh Boruch Hu and to maintain His honor always. We must uphold in the minds of all those who see us the attitude of – "Yes, they are fine people." Not just that we are fine, but that we are that way because of our connection to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. **יִגְדַּל נָא כֹּחַ הַשֵּׁם** means that in whatever we do, we do it with the intention of making Hashem great in this world.

● Fruit of The Land

שְׁלַח לְךָ אֲנָשִׁים וְיָתֻרוּ אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן – *Send forth men, and they should survey the Land of Canaan* (Shelach 13:2). When our forefathers were approaching the borders of *Eretz Canaan* they were commanded by Hakodosh Boruch Hu to send out spies to search out the land in preparation for its eventual conquest and settlement.

● Show and Tell

There's a lot of important information twelve spies can gather over forty days and they came back and reported everything. However, we make note of a very curious thing; along with their report they brought something else: **וַיָּשִׁיבוּ אוֹתָם דָּבָר וְאֶת כָּל הָעֵדָה** – *They reported back to Moshe and Aharon and to the whole nation,* **וַיַּרְאוּם אֶת פְּרִי הָאָרֶץ** – *and they showed them the fruits of the land* (Shelach 13:26). They didn't just *tell* the *Am Yisroel* about the fruit; they brought back samples. And they didn't do it on their own; they were following the command of Moshe Rabeinu: **וּלְקַחְתֶּם מִפְּרִי הָאָרֶץ** – *And you should take from the fruit of the land* (ibid. 20)

Now, that's surprising because they could have satisfied themselves with a description of what they saw. And what a description it would have been! The land at that time was the most fertile and beautiful place in the world. One of the reasons that it took so long before Hakodosh Boruch Hu fulfilled His promise to give *Eretz Canaan* to the *Am Yisroel* was that the land was being prepared for them.

● The Big Garden of Eden

For hundreds of years the land of *Canaan* was being improved by the Seven Nations — and they were doing an excellent job. They were expert agriculturists, and they were putting in all that they could to make the land more beautiful and fruitful.

And because of that the whole land became like one big garden. It was a *Gan Eden!* They terraced every hill and every mountainside – there wasn't a span of earth that was uncultivated. And the very

best produce grew there. It was a remarkable thing what they made from that land. If we could take a look at the land as it was when the *Bnei Yisroel* entered, we would have been amazed at the remarkable fertility of that land. The land was *tovah ha'aretz me'od me'od* (ibid. 14:7).

● **A Land of Milk and Honey**

That's what the *meraglim* told the nation when they returned from their mission: "It's a very good land that is *zavas chalav udevash* – it's flowing with milk and honey." And when it says *chalav u'devash,* we have to know it was literally so. The dates hanging on the trees were so fat with *devash* that they split open and the honey dripped down; everywhere you walked you were up to your ankles with honey. Not only that; the goats were healthy and strong and they produced so much milk that their udders couldn't contain their milk; they were dripping with milk. And so the fields were filled with date honey and goat milk – and it remained like that for many years. Rabba bar Bar Chana lived a long time after the *churban* and he described it: "I was once walking in the fields of *Eretz Yisroel* in a certain place where it was still *zavas chalav u'dvash;* I was wading in milk and honey up to my ankles."

Did you ever try milk and date honey? I'm telling you it's very good. The creamy sweet taste of the milk mixes with the fruity flavor of the date honey and the result is very pleasurable to the human palate – it's a delectable mixture. And so they used to bend over and scoop up a cupful of milk and date honey and eat it; they would make a nice *bracha* and keep on walking in the fields, scooping and eating, scooping and eating.

"The land was dripping with milk and honey; with all good things." That's how the *meraglim* described the land. But a description wasn't enough. זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבַשׁ הִוא וְזֶה פִּרְיָהּ – It's flowing with milk and honey, *and these are its fruit.* Not only did they give a report about

the land, but they also lugged a bunch of grapes along with them to show the people.

● The Great Grapes

And they weren't like our grapes that you bring home in a shopping bag – no, these were enormous; each one was the size of a grapefruit. One cluster of grapes was so huge that **וַיִּשְׂאֻהוּ בַמּוֹט בִּשְׁנָיִם** – *they carried it on a pole with two people;* to bring it back the cluster they had to tie it to a pole. That's the minimum *peirush* — that two people carried a pole and on the pole was hanging a cluster of grapes. They were *that* heavy. It was as big as a cow, maybe bigger.

The truth is that it might have been even *more* than that. The *gemara* in Sotah (34a) says they carried the cluster, **בַּמּוֹט בִּשְׁנָיִם**, with two poles; not two *people* but two *poles*. So, there were four people, each pair carrying a pole and the cluster was hanging down between both poles. And another *man d'amar* there claims it was two poles across two poles – two poles from north to south and another two supporting poles from east to west. It means eight people were needed to carry one cluster of grapes. One *eshkol anavim* from *Eretz Yisroel* was so big that it took eight grown men to carry it.

● Valley of The Cluster

Whatever it was, even according to the simple *pshat* that it was one cluster carried on a pole, it was something to look at! It was so remarkable that they even gave a name to that place after that cluster of grapes. *Nachal Eshkol!* The Valley of the Cluster.

Now, the question for us is what's this big hullabaloo about fruit. To come back with battle strategies, I understand. But to gather such heavy fruit and to carry them on poles for miles and miles to the *machaneh Yisroel?* It's not gold after all; it's just grapes. What was so important about the fruit that the nation had to see it with their own eyes?

● Back to the Beginning

Now, in order to answer this question we're going to have to go back to the very beginning of time where we find the first time that fruit are mentioned in the Torah. "And the earth brought forth vegetation; herbage yielding seed after its kind and fruit trees that make fruit according to its kind with seeds in it (Bereishis 1:11).

Now, it's remarkable how little mention is made in this *possuk* to the grains – wheat, barley, rice and the other cereals that are the mainstay of Mankind. Barley! The wonders of barley—barley is used all over the world! Or rice! Rice feeds millions in Asia. But not one word. The Torah could have told us about the wonders of potatoes. Do you know that the potato is a wonderful vegetable? It's like a bun; it's a big mass of starch collected in one place—a ball of starch that fills you up; it's remarkable. When they brought potatoes to Europe for the first time, people were amazed. Some fruit have starch too but here is a whole bowl of starch. It's amazing! And it was immediately seized upon by some nations in Europe and it became their staple. Poland and Ireland adopted the potato as their national food and the masses lived off potatoes.

Potatoes are a miracle. Did you ever see a big potato cooked or boiled? It's enough for a full meal; it's filling. Maybe you want a little bit of fish with it, a little bit of something else? OK; but it's the potato that fills you up!

● Why Ignore The Potatoes?

And yet, the Torah lumps all of those miracles – the potatoes and the barley and the rice and the maize and the cabbage and countless other beneficial produce – together in the word *desheh*. They are all lumped together in a brief notice: "Let the earth bring forth grass and herbs yielding seed." The food that has fed the world since the beginning of time is given scant attention; just a few words.

And it's the "fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind" – although but a very minor part of human sustenance – that is given especial attention. Not just in that verse; it's repeated again and again. Look in the Chumash there and you'll see that the Torah mentions fruit several times while other things that we would think are more important are not mentioned at all.

And that's because more than anything else – more than potatoes and rice and barley; more than all of that – fruit is the most remarkable demonstration of Hashem's kindness and wisdom. When you see an apple on the tree, when you see a grape on the vine—it's a masterpiece, a beautiful thing. A fruit hanging on a tree is a jewel. It's more precious than a jewel. A jewel is a dead thing, a lifeless thing. It can't teach you anything. But the grape and the apple and the peach and the cherry and all the other fruit teach us more than anything else about the *niflaos* of the *chesed Hashem*, all about the beauty that Hashem put into this world. Fruits are a great opportunity to gain Awareness of Hashem and that's why the Torah emphasizes the fruit of the trees more than anything else.

● Gan Eden Was A Fruit Orchard

And that's why when Adam and Chava were put into this world they were put into a Gan of Fruit Trees. And when Hakodosh Boruch Hu describes that glorious garden in the Torah, the one thing we're told about is that it was full of fruit trees. Trees are the outstanding features of that garden; that's what's emphasized.

Now, I'm certain that the garden had wheat. I'm certain that there was rice growing there as well. It had all kinds of useful vegetables. I'm sure it had garlic and onions too. How could you live without garlic and onions? It's important in life. And yet none of those are mentioned. But one thing is mentioned and conspicuously reiterated — *the fruit of the trees.*

Now, we were children when we learned this story for the first time and we still think in the terms that children think about; but we're

adults now and we should therefore make an attempt to reconsider that story. There's something of immense significance here – Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave to Adam and Chava a garden of nothing but fruit trees. If this is how the history of the world began, it means that's how it was intended to be. Of all the gifts in the world that Hashem could have given to the first man, He chose to give him the gift of a fruit orchard.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Private / Public

רֵאשִׁית עֲרִסֹתֵיכֶם חַלָּה תָּרִימוּ תְּרוּמָה כִּתְרוּמַת גֹּרֶן כֵּן תָּרִימוּ אֹתָהּ – '***The first portion of your dough, you shall separate a loaf for a gift; as in the case of the gift of the threshing floor, so shall you separate it.***' 15:20 . - When you separate Challoh, do it in the same way that you would separate Trumah.

When a person gives terumah, that goes to the Kohen. When a person takes challah, he also gives it as a gift to the Kohen. But the pasuk says that when you take challah, do it in the same way as you would do with terumah.

These are two separate things – what is the connection? Why the comparison to taking terumah in the granary?

We know that there is a difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion. Tax evasion is illegal, whereas tax avoidance is permitted. In terms of terumah, it is the same – There are halachically permitted ways of minimizing the amount of terumah given, e.g. by bringing the crops home and taking it into storage through the sky-lights instead of through the door.

But this is highly unlikely, as a person would be embarrassed to be seen doing this tax avoidance very publicly. **דבפרהסיא זילא מילתא**.

When it comes to challah, there are also ways out of giving it to the kohen, e.g. making small batches.

Says the **משך חכמה** – That's why the Torah puts challah next to terumah. A person should give challah in the same way that he gives terumah. Just like with terumah, you are not going to attempt to avoid the tax, similarly with challah, don't attempt to avoid the tax – even though it is done in the privacy of your own home. A person should have the fear of Heaven on himself (**ויהי מורא שמים עליכם כמורא בשר ודם**).

When **R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l**, Rosh Yeshivah of Mir, first arrived in Eretz Yisroel, he slept at the home of **R' Leizer Yudel Finkel zt"l**, his uncle and Rosh Yeshivah, where he had an excellent opportunity to observe his uncle's saintly ways. R' Nosson Tzvi told his talmidim that he rarely ever saw R' Leizer Yudel waking up in the morning. He was always up early learning Torah. But early one morning, he finally merited seeing his uncle start his day.





Getting out of bed, R' Leizer Yudel went over to his bookshelf and lovingly extended his arms over the whole Shas on the shelves. He passionately kissed their worn covers and begged Hashem to inspire him to study Torah and teach it to others.

R' Nosson Tzvi said over in his own words the story of when he first came to the Mir. "I was

exhausted from the trip. It was well over 24 hours since I left Chicago O'Hare Airport. I was anxious to get settled and get a good night sleep.

"After eating and talking for a while with the Rosh Yeshivah and his Rebbetzin, I was shown to my room. I thanked them for their warmth and hospitality and laid down to sleep. A short while later, the door opened. R' Laizer Yudel was checking to make sure I was sleeping and although I gave no indication that I was still awake, I peeked out from under my covers to witness something incredible.

Located directly above my bed was a set of Shas. R' Leizer Yudel spread out his arms wide until his hands were able to touch both ends of the collection of Gemaros. And then with deep emotion, he hugged and kissed them. Then, he whispered, so as not to wake me up, 'Torah, ich hub dir azoi leeb!'" (Torah, I love you so much!)

[This is how R' Leizer Yudel behaved in the privacy of his own home.]

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - The Japanese Businessman

A certain American Jew who worked as a retailer sought to sell his business since it wasn't earning enough profit. He consulted with a friend of his who was also in business, and asked if he knew anyone who might want his merchandise. The businessman recommended that he go to Japan.

"What's in Japan?"

"I'm telling you, if you're not doing well here, then go to Japan!" The retailer purchased a first-class plane ticket for the next flight out.

His neighbor on the plane was a Japanese businessman.

The plane took off, and the first-class passengers were served a gourmet meal and fine wine, while the Jewish retailer sufficed with the kosher meal served to him on a plastic tray. His meal seemed

meager and bland compared to the food his fellow passengers were enjoying. "Why aren't you eating any of this good food?" the Japanese man sitting next to him asked.

"I only eat kosher," the American explained.

"No one here is watching," the Japanese man said. "What will happen if you eat one of the regular meals? You did pay for it, after all." "Maybe no man is watching, but G-d, Whose glory fills the entire world, can see me wherever I am."



They conversed for the rest of the flight, and when the plane landed, the Japanese businessman gave the American his number. "If you ever need help," he said, "give me a call."

Over the next month, the Jewish retailer tried selling his merchandise, but no one was buying. Everywhere he went, he was told that they already had similar goods and for better prices. He started to feel like all the doors were slamming shut in his face.

Feeling dejected, he thought about returning home when he remembered the Japanese businessman. He dialled the man's number, and his voice came on the line: "I've been looking for you. Can you come see me?"

"Where are you?"

"My office is in the Sony building. Eighth floor."

The American retailer arrived at the Sony building, a magnificent, towering edifice, stepped into the elevator, and rode to the eighth floor. The secretary showed him into a large, well-appointed office,

and sitting behind an enormous desk was the Japanese businessman the retailer had sat next to on the plane.

"Our largest factory is in the United States," said the Japanese man, who happened to be the CEO of Sony. "When we met, I was returning from there. I had been following up on allegations that the director was embezzling funds. The allegations proved to be true, and I had to fire him. Now I'm looking for a replacement. We need someone who is not only ready to work hard but is also absolutely trustworthy.

"During the flight, I saw how faithful you are to your religious practices, even when no one is looking. As we conversed, I could also tell that you're smart and knowledgeable about business. I want to offer you the job of director of our US offices. I'm prepared to offer a generous salary as well as stock options."

The retailer returned to America, left the company he had been working for, and became a vice president for Sony. It was an amazing opportunity, and he grabbed it with both hands. And it all happened in the merit of his yiras Shamayim, of being unwilling to compromise on his Torah values.



A Potent Combination

Rabbi Moshe Tuvia Lieff boarded an El Al flight and found himself seated in an aisle seat next to two middle-aged women, one Israeli and the other American. The women's facial expressions made it obvious that they were not pleased to be seated next to a religious rabbi.

Rabbi Lieff greeted them politely and made small talk for a few minutes in both Hebrew and English. Then he said, "Ladies, I am sitting in the 'excuse me' seat." They both looked at him quizzically. "That means," he explained, "that it is a seat that is a privilege, but

it also comes with great responsibility. If you need to get up, just ask me to excuse you, and I will be happy to let you through as many times as you need. Please feel free even to wake me up if you need to get up."

The flight passed uneventfully. After disembarking, Rabbi Lieff was waiting in the parking lot, when a loud shriek echoed from behind him. He turned around just in time to see a car come to an abrupt halt beside him. Inside the car was his Israeli seatmate, along with a tall paratrooper who was clearly her son. "Zeh harav! Zeh harav!" she was shouting excitedly in Hebrew. "This is the rabbi I told you about! If more people acted like him, we would have no problems!"

Kedushah and good middos are the two ingredients for the creation of a kiddush Hashem. Together, these two make a potent combination that can bring incredible honor to the Master of the Universe. Neither one, however, can be effective without the other. A person who is steeped in holiness and religious dedication must develop his character as well, or he will not succeed in fostering a kiddush Hashem. - Derech eretz kadmah l'Torah.

If a person's Torah learning and mitzvah observance are not accompanied by proper middos, his Torah will lack the power to be mekadesh Shem Shamayim. In fact, the Torah he learns may become a chillul Hashem rather than a kiddush Hashem. Torah and middos are a "package deal"; one cannot exist without the other.

"Just as the Torah is comprised of five separate books, independent units, nevertheless, they form one Torah. Similarly, Klal Yisrael is comprised of many different factions - Kohanim, Leviim, Yisraelim, Chassidim, Misnagdim - each with their own function, all forming one great Nation, cherished by G-d!" ~ Chiddushei Harim.

A Message from the Kalever Rebbe - True Strength in War

In troubling times, we need to make good resolutions. Whenever the threat of a major war arises — especially in light of recent events — the world quickly descends into fear and anxiety, gripped by the dread of a potential global catastrophe.

In today's technological age, fear is magnified by the relentless flow of information from media outlets. Constant exposure to news updates subtly pulls people away from a spiritual perspective.

Rather than turning inward and strengthening their emunah during these troubling times, many become fixated on human efforts — military strategy, political maneuvering, and displays of power. The more they absorb, the more they are drawn into the illusion that human hands control the outcome.

But this is a tragic mistake. True security doesn't come from armies or diplomacy — it comes from Hashem alone.

In times like these, we must hold fast to the timeless wisdom of Chazal, who taught in Sotah that in the era of Ikvesa D'Meshicha — the footsteps of Moshiach — our only true support is Hashem.

When the world feels uncertain and unstable, our task is clear and unwavering: to place our trust solely in our Father in Heaven. This is not a time for confidence in human strength or power. It is a time to remember that salvation does not come through might, but through emunah, faith.

In such times, the clearest path forward is to awaken our hearts and draw closer to Hashem—through strengthening our observance of mitzvos and turning to Him in sincere prayer and pleading.

R' Chaim Vital, zt"l, writes in Eitz HaDaas Tov (Chapter 24) that in the end of days, a most difficult exile will come through the children of Yishmael. And in that dark time, he warns, salvation will not come through strength or strategy — but only through heartfelt cries and tefillos to Hashem.

A Time for Teshuvah

The Chafetz Chaim, zt"l, once announced, that he would deliver a halachic lecture in his home for the students of his yeshivah. When all the students had gathered, he simply read to them a single line from Sanhedrin (97b), which discusses the coming of Moshiach: "Rav said: All the appointed times have passed, and the matter depends solely on teshuvah (repentance)."

That was the entire lesson.

Through this simple yet profound act, the Chafetz Chaim was teaching his students a powerful truth: in our times, as we witness the suffering and upheaval that marks the birth pangs of Moshiach's arrival, the halachic response is clear — we must awaken from our spiritual slumber and empower ourselves through the process of teshuvah. Redemption does not hinge on politics or power, but on the spiritual awakening of the Jewish people.

And when that awakening does not come on its own, Heaven intervenes. As the Gemara explains, when the Jewish people delay repentance, Hashem appoints a king with decrees as harsh as Haman's — forcing them to return and correct their ways. These difficult moments are not random; they are lovingly orchestrated to stir us from within and guide us back to Him.

The Chafetz Chaim zt"l offered a striking interpretation of the Mishnah at the end of Sotah, which describes the era of Ikvesa D'Meshicha as a time when "the face of the generation is like the face of a dog."

The Chafetz Chaim explained that when a person throws a stone and a dog chases after it, the dog bites the stone with all its might, injuring its teeth—entirely fixated on the object that struck it, without ever turning to see who threw it. So too, in our generation, many respond only to the immediate pain and turmoil, focusing solely on the surface events. They never pause to recognize that it is

Hashem who is behind it all—lovingly sending these challenges as a wake-up call, urging us to return to Him in teshuvah.

R' Elchanan Wasserman, zt"l, wrote in Ikvesa D'Meshicha (1:13):

"There is no use in striking at the stick—for are there not countless sticks in Heaven? Hashem has many agents. What we must do is act in ways that prevent the nations from being empowered to raise their sticks against us. Yet our modern leaders have declared war on mighty empires. And what has come of it? They have only fueled the fury of the serpents against us. They see the stick—but refuse to acknowledge the One who wields it."

These words ring truer than ever: when we focus only on worldly threats and forget the Divine source behind them, we lose the very key to our salvation.

During these times, a person must take immediate action. It's not enough to feel inspired; a person must take that inspiration and turn it into concrete growth by accepting a meaningful, spiritual commitment—something new, something that moves him forward on the path of teshuvah.

In this merit, he will not only experience personal salvation from his troubles, but also help hasten the ultimate redemption for all of Klal Yisroel.

Seeing the Good of the Land: The Holiness of Tel Aviv

הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבַרְנוּ בָהּ לָתוּר אֹתָהּ טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד - I have "come and seen the Land and it is very very good" [Bamidbar 14:7].

A student of **Reb Yisrael Salanter** once went to his master and told him that he was going to Eretz Yisrael. He inquired of his Rebbe what he should be careful about. Reb Yisrael told him to be careful not to transgress the prohibition of speaking Lashon HaRah [evil] about Eretz Yisrael.

Just as our ancestors' actions set patterns for us in a positive direction (ma'aseh Avos siman l'Banim), so too can they do in a negative direction. There was an action of our ancestors concerning Eretz Yisrael — the incident of the Spies. This incident implanted for all generations a tendency within us, that when a person goes to visit Eretz Yisrael he may wish to dwell on its shortcomings rather than on its tremendous attributes. Reb Yisroel therefore told the student "Be careful, and don't stumble in the sin of the spies."

When the **Gerrer Rebbe, zt"l**, went to Eretz Yisrael before the Second World War he wrote back a letter and referred to the "holy city of Tel Aviv". His Chassidim wondered — we would understand "the holy city of Jerusalem"; we would understand "the holy city of Hevron"; "the holy city of Tzfat" — But the "holy city of Tel Aviv"?! What is so holy about Tel Aviv?

The Gerrer Rebbe wrote back and told his Chassidim, "The only Houses of Worship in Tel Aviv are synagogues! Other cities have churches and mosques, but Tel Aviv is holy — it has only synagogues!"

This is the "lift your eyes" — to see that Tel Aviv has its holiness and not to dwell upon the imperfections.

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

The Aveirah of the Meraglim seems to be Lashon Hara, and not heresy for arguing with Hashem's guarantee, which seems to be a greater Aveirah!

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, explains that when one does a negative action for absolutely no purpose, it is far worse than turning against Hashem.

Short Story by Yoni Schwartz

He heard a faint squeak as he opened the old-fashioned door. The first thing that caught his mind about the room was how many seforim there were inside. Yaakov (not real name) had come to **Rav Elazar Shach, ZT"L**, for advice about which job to take. He had been offered a teaching position at two different institutions and asked for the Rav's opinion on which one to choose.

In an audible yet gentle voice, Rav Shach said, "Come back in a few days. I need some time to think about it."

A few days later, he heard, "Ring, ring." He answered the phone and was surprised by who was on the other line. The voice sounded slightly excited and very curious. One of the two institutions called to ask, "What is your connection to Rav Shach?!"

A bit confused he responded with a slight stutter, "Ah…ah…ah…I'm sorry. What?" They repeated the question. He responded, "I'm not extremely close to him. I had simply asked the Rav for guidance on which job to take. How did you know I spoke with him?"

They told him, "Did you know he rode the bus for almost an hour to come here in person and check out our place?" It turned out that Rav Shach had taken the time out of his overwhelmingly tight schedule to go down to each facility to see which was best.

A few days later, he returned to Rav Shach, who told him which job he thought he should take, which happened to be the place that had recently called him. Afterwards, he asked the Rav, "Why did the Rav travel so far to check out each place? I didn't mean for him to shlep."

Rav Shach's response was touching yet powerful: "A Jew asks me for advice, and I shouldn't do everything to ensure he gets the best guidance possible?!"



Inspired by Time - Inspiration which ticks your heart – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

עת צרה היא ליעקב וממנה יִוָּשֵׁעַ — We are living through a time of profound tzarah for Am Yisrael.

The war raging in Eretz Yisrael against Iran has placed Klal Yisrael in grave danger. Jewish blood has been spilled, and countless families are living in fear, grief, and uncertainty. As I write, the all-out war with Iran has already left a trail of devastation. Hundreds of our brothers and sisters have been wounded. Many precious lives have been lost. Entire homes have been obliterated. Families torn apart. Streets unrecognizable. And still—the danger has not passed.

We have yet to grasp the full extent of the casualties. But what we do know is chilling: Iran is not merely targeting military installations. They are targeting Jews. Not soldiers—Jews. Any Jew. Every Jew. This is not a war against an army. This is a war against Am Yisrael.

Yes, we are living through an eis tzara. And it is unlike anything many of us have witnessed in our lifetimes. - Yet, in the very face of darkness, Klal Yisrael shines with light. In these moments, we strengthen our emuna. We lift our eyes to the Ribbono Shel Olam and declare, "Ein lanu al mi l'hisha'ein ella al Avinu she'ba'shamayim - We have no one to rely on but our Father in Heaven."

This is our moment to rise—not in fear, but in faith. Not in paralysis, but in prayer. Not in silence, but in achdus. Our greatest yeshuos have always been born in our darkest hours. Mitzrayim. Purim. The Sho'ah. Time and again, when the world thought we would disappear, we rose from the ashes stronger—filled with more Torah, more fire than ever before.

Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l offers a striking mashal: Sometimes, you speed down the highway, racing to get home. You glance out the window and notice something strange—the trees alongside the road seem to be rushing toward you. - What? Do trees move? Of course not. The trees are standing still; it's just that you are moving so fast that it appears as though the trees are flying toward you.

Likewise, in times of tzara we feel as though we are drawing closer to Hashem—but perhaps it is only an illusion. Perhaps it is not we who have moved; rather, Hashem has pulled us closer. He is the One who has closed the gap—but if we do not seize this opportunity, we remain exactly where we were.

Today, we find ourselves once again in the midst of a national crisis. Missiles fall, fear spreads, and the future is uncertain. But if our only response is to stockpile food, discuss the news, and maybe add a kapitl Tehillim after davening—we've missed the point. This moment is not meant to pass over us unchanged. Hashem isn't doing this **to** us—He is doing this **for** us. He wants to raise us, to move us, to bring out something greater within us.

At this moment there is perhaps no parsha in the Torah more timely than Shelach. Klal Yisrael faced a terrifying reality—nations mightier than they, were poised in the Land—and they were commanded to go forward. The Torah shows us what happens when fear wins, and what happens when emuna wins.

The Ramban offers a powerful explanation that resonates deeply as we face these turbulent times. The land the meraglim surveyed was indeed dangerous—its cities fortified, its people mighty, its threats very real. The giants they described were no mere legend. But the fatal flaw in their report was not the truth itself; it was the absence of Hashem in their vision. They described reality through human eyes alone, forgetting the fundamental truth: Hashem is the Master of all, the One who directs the course of history and holds all life in His hands.

Putting the puzzle together

Many years ago, there was a king unlike any other—a powerful leader whose very name commanded respect and fear. His realm stretched far and wide, supported by devoted soldiers and wise generals.

One day, reliable intelligence arrived: a hostile nation nearby was plotting an attack. The king called together his closest advisers, his top generals, and most important ministers to the palace. The moment to prepare and respond had arrived.

The war room was prepared, and, at its centre lay a massive, intricate map stretching across an enormous table—etched with mountains, rivers, city borders, topography, and intelligence notes. Every detail was marked with colored pins and scribbled annotations.

For three full days, the room buzzed with activity. The finest minds crafted a brilliant strategy. Infantry units, cavalry movements, supply routes—every possible scenario had been accounted for. The generals were confident. Victory was within reach.

Finally, after three days, they paused for a brief break. They left the war room—just for some coffee and rest. When they returned, the sight before them made them freeze in their tracks. There, standing in the centre of the room, smiling with childish glee, was the king's two-year-old son. Somehow, the toddler had wandered in, climbed onto the table, and pulled the map down to the floor. It lay in tatters—hundreds of pieces strewn everywhere. Pins were scattered, notes shredded. It was chaos.

The generals were in shock. Three days of planning destroyed in a moment. Silence filled the room. The king, usually composed, stood stunned. There was no clear way to repair such devastation.

Then, from the back of the room, the Minister of Defence stepped forward. "Your Majesty," he said calmly, "if you grant me thirty minutes in a quiet room, I believe I can restore the map."

The others scoffed. "Impossible," they said. "It would take months." But the king, with nothing to lose, agreed. The minister gathered the scraps and quietly left. - Exactly thirty minutes later, he returned, laying the map back on the table—perfectly restored.

The king's eyes widened. "How did you do it?" he asked in amazement.

The minister smiled and replied, "Everyone focused on the front of the map—on the topography, the data, the strategies. But I turned the pieces over. And on the back of the map, Your Majesty, was your portrait. I've looked upon your face a thousand times. I didn't rebuild the war plan—I rebuilt you. And once the image of the king was complete, the map fell into place."

This is exactly where we are today. The world feels shredded and chaotic. Missiles are falling. Sirens are blaring. Everything we knew feels torn apart. We stare at the front side of the map, desperate to make sense of it—but nothing fits. - And that's because we're looking at the wrong side. We need to turn the map over.

Behind the chaos is the face of the King—Melech Malchei haMelachim. The Ribbono Shel Olam is orchestrating every step, every moment. The headlines look frightening. The pain feels overwhelming. But the back of the map is whole. If we can restore our emuna, strengthen our tefila, rebuild our bitachon—if we can piece together the image of Hashem—then everything begins to fall into place.

That is the lesson of Parshas Shelach. The meraglim saw giants. They saw defeat. Yehoshua and Kalev saw something else. They saw Hashem. They saw the King. They saw the land not through fear, but through faith. - And once you see the King—no matter how broken the front may look—the map comes back together.

A Genuine Sacrifice

A Yid boarded a plane and, upon reaching his assigned seat, saw that a woman was seated next to it. He stood quietly in the aisle, weighing his options. As he stood there, a steward approached. Without a word of explanation, the non-Jewish steward seemed to understand the situation right away. "Come," he said, "let me help you."

He proceeded to look for someone willing to switch seats, and together they found a suitable alternative. The Yid was deeply grateful and turned to the steward to thank him.

"I travel often," he said, "and in similar situations, flight attendants typically react with frustration or even hostility. Why were you so understanding and willing to help?" - The steward smiled and shared the following:

"Once, I was working on a flight where an Orthodox Jew had a seat in business class. He saw that the seat next to his was occupied by a woman and quietly asked if I could move him. Given the premium service level in business class, I explained that a switch wasn't possible within the cabin. "But then he asked if I could move him to economy class instead. I was stunned — why would someone willingly give up a business class seat?

"He explained simply that he couldn't sit in such close proximity to a woman, and would rather sit anywhere else on the plane than compromise on this religious sensitivity. It wasn't hard to find someone eager to take his seat in business class, and we arranged the switch.

"That moment stayed with me. Until then, I thought people who asked for these types of changes were just trying to get a better seat under the pretext of religious observance. But that Jew's sincerity changed my perspective. From then on, I understood it was genuine, and I've been happy to help ever since."

Chizuk - Inspiration

In 1923, **Rabbi Meir Shapiro**, the founder of Daf Yami, was establishing his Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin in Poland. During construction, the contractor discovered he had made a significant error in his project costs and realized that he had undercharged the Yeshiva. Due to the error, the contractor would lose money on the project. Fearful and embarrassed to ask the Yeshiva for more money, he continued building while secretly using inferior materials to cut corners and minimize his losses.

Rabbi Shapiro noticed the inferior materials being used and called the contractor into his office. Realizing that he had been found out, he expected to be fired, shamed, and was prepared to lose his hard-earned reputation within the Jewish community. Instead, Rabbi Shapiro said, "Show me your original project cost calculations."

After reviewing them, Rabbi Shapiro said, "I see the mistake. This was an honest error that anyone could have made." Rabbi Shapiro then recalculated what the building should have costed and paid the contractor the difference from his own funds which he had been saving for years.

The contractor protested, saying it was his mistake to bear. Rabbi Shapiro responded, "If I allow you to lose money building a house of Torah study, what lesson does that teach? That Torah brings ruin to those who serve it? No. Your honesty in showing me these calculations is worth more to me than the money I spent."

The contractor was so moved that he not only replaced the inferior materials that had been used, but he also added building and structural enhancements at his own expense. The building became renowned for its beauty and durability. The contractor's family still tells this story, emphasizing Rabbi Shapiro's honesty and integrity.

Rabbi Shapiro could have rightfully insisted that the price he agreed to with the contractor was the price to be paid and insist that the

contractor build the Yeshiva with the proper materials and eat any losses due to his error. Instead, Rabbi Shapiro insisted on paying from his own funds, the rightful project costs of the Yeshiva to ensure that the contractor would not lose any money.



Seeing It 'My Way'

In this week's parsha we learn about the famous incident of the spies, who were sent to give a report of Eretz Yisroel and came back with a very negative report. They caused the entire nation to sin, by despairing of ever entering the Land. As atonement, the Jewish people had to spend 40 years in the desert. This was a seminal event, an event that changed Jewish history.

One of the ways in which the spies described Israel was "a land that devours its inhabitants" [Bamidbar 13:32]. The Talmud [Sotah 35a] tells us that this refers to the fact that as the spies passed through the land, going from place to place and from city to city, they saw huge funeral processions wherever they went. Having seen death everywhere, they came back with the conclusion, that this must be a land that devours its inhabitants.

The Steipler zt"l, offers a beautiful insight: This incident illustrates a time-honored truth — a person sees what he wants to see, he hears what he wants to hear, and he believes what he wants to believe. One person can see a certain incident and look at it objectively and come out with one conclusion and another person can see the same incident and come to a totally different conclusion.

Our Sages tell us that the spies walked into the Land of Israel with a jaundiced eye. They had their own agenda. The Ba'al HaTurim

states they were worried that when they came into Israel there would be a new order and they would lose their positions of prominence. Therefore they went in with a negative approach to the whole idea of entering Eretz Yisroel.

They should have looked at the funerals and said, "Look at this amazing Divine Providence. Look at how G-d is protecting us! Here we are spies and spies are always worried about being detected, so G-d caused the people to be distracted and preoccupied with the funerals so that we won't be noticed. What Hashgocha protis!"

They should have seen this and recognized that if G-d offers such protection to the expeditionary force, He would certainly offer Divine protection to the entire Jewish nation. That's how they should have seen it objectively, if they didn't have their own agenda. But because of their agenda they looked at these events and said "Amazing- everyone is dying — it must be a country that devours its inhabitants."

The Steipler observes that their argument was counter-intuitive. If in fact Eretz Yisroel was a country where people were constantly dying and funerals were commonplace, then we would not expect to see large funeral processions. If peaple would go to a half-dozen funerals a day, they would never get anything else done. People would attend funerals because they were relatively rare events; otherwise just the family members would bury their own dead.

The problem is that people see what they want to see. If one comes in with rose colored glasses then everything looks rosy, but if one comes in with a negative attitude, he will only see the problems.

We once mentioned an unbelievable insight regarding this concept from **Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz**.

The Talmud [Gittin 45a] tells us that Rav Ilish was captured by Gentiles. He was sitting in jail and was contemplating whether or not to try to escape. A bird came and said to him "Ilish — flee; Ilish —

flee". Rav Ilish asked his cell-mate what the bird was saying. The cell-mate told him that the bird was telling him to escape. Rav Ilish reasoned that the bird was a raven, and could not be trusted. He discounted the bird's message.

Then another type of bird came along and said "Ilish — flee; Ilish — flee". Rav Ilish again asked his cell-mate what the bird was saying. The cell-mate again told him that the bird was telling him to run away. Rav Ilish said that this bird was not a liar and therefore he decided to run away.

Rav Akiva Eiger cites the Seder Olam, which records that Rav Ilish was an expert in understanding the conversation of birds. However, it seems from our incident in the Talmud that Rav Ilish did not understand the conversation of birds — since he consulted with his cellmate regarding what the birds were saying.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that Rav Ilish did understand the conversation of birds, and he knew they were telling him to flee, but since that is what he wanted to hear — he did not trust himself. Since he knew that a person hears what he wants to hear and knew that he wanted to flee, he didn't want to rely on his own hearing to interpret the birds' message.

The spies came into the Land and said, "the cup is half empty" because they came in jaundiced and negative. They took an innocuous event — indeed they took a positive event that should have showed them Hashgocha protis [Divine supervision] — and they turned it around and saw only bad. Such is the power of the human being and his partiality to his own agenda.

Rav Akiva Eiger zt"l once commented: "Without faith in Hashem one cannot even pass the threshold of his home; however, with faith in Hashem, he has the ability to even split the sea!

We Know We Are 'Nogeah', but We Won't Let That Influence Us – Famous Last Words

The story of the *Meraglim* [Spies] is one of the more difficult stories in the Torah to understand. The Torah says, "Send forth for yourself *anashim…*" [Bamidbar 12:2]. Chazal say that the word *anashim* indicates that they were *tzadikim*. So, these people were righteous individuals. **Rav Dovid Povarsky, z"l**, points out, in a talk about the *Meraglim* (given in 1987), that not only did these individuals have a reputation of being *tzadikim*, but their mere act of going on this mission was itself an act of righteousness.

"Spying" is dangerous business. If someone were to fill out a life insurance form and list as his line of employment "CIA; Covert Operations", he will certainly need to pay a premium rate for life insurance. It is a dangerous occupation. Moshe Rabbeinu tells these righteous individuals, in effect, "I am sending you on an extremely dangerous mission." They responded, "Fine, we are ready to go."

Add to that another factor. **The Zohar** writes that, at the end of the day, the reason they came back with such a bad report was because they knew that even though at this point in time when they were in the Wilderness they occupied positions of leadership, they knew that when Bnei Yisroel enter *Eretz Yisrael*– for whatever reason it may be – they were no longer going to retain their positions of leadership.

If someone were to ask me to go on a dangerous mission, put myself in danger and – "Guess what? – when you get back, I am going to fire you," I would say "Get somebody else." Most people would say "Why don't you ask the people you are going to appoint to be tribal leaders in*Eretz Yisrael*? Let them face this dangerous mission!

The very fact that they went on a dangerous mission, knowing that the result of the mission would be their losing their jobs, is itself justification for giving them the title *anashim = tzadikim*!

So, the question is – why in fact did they accept the mission? This is a mission that was going to cost them their jobs, their honor, and their whole roles in life! The answer is – and herein lies one of the great truths of life – that they thought: "We will be able to handle it. We know it is a dangerous mission. We know this may cost us our jobs, but we will be able to overcome any personal bias and prejudice that we have, and we will be able to report the truth."

Moshe Rabbeinu had grave doubts whether they would be able to do that. Chazal say that Moshe changed the name of his disciple Hoshea, to Yehoshua to connote, "May G-d (*K-ah*) save you from the counsel of the spies." Moshe sensed that something amiss may occur. Kalev, Chazal say, went to pray by the gravesite of his ancestors. Why were they so worried? The answer is that Moshe realizes that all these twelve *Meraglim* are walking a tightrope. They will be going on a dangerous mission, one in which they will be tempted (consciously or subconsciously) to skew the information they are supposed to report. They did it because they said, "We will be able to do it anyway."

This is a lesson for all of us, and this is something that happens all the time. You ask somebody for advice and his answer to you is "I may be '*nogeah*' [have a personal interest in the matter], but this is what the truth is anyway…" When you hear those words – forget it! Greater and wiser people have not been able to overcome personal interest and subconscious bias to give sound and accurate advice about matters which affect them negatively. That is exactly what the *Meraglim* said. "We know we might have an agenda, and we know we might lose our jobs, but we will be able to give a fair and balanced opinion of the situation, and we will not be swayed by our personal interests!" Famous last words!

To me, this is one of the greatest challenges of life. In varying situations, we all have different agendas. We all have our personal biases. How does a person overcome that? Merely recognizing and

saying "I am a *'nogeah'* but…" is not a defense at all. Whenever you hear those words, run the other way. The only solution I have to this conundrum of life is to ask someone else who is absolutely not *'nogeah'* for their opinion on the matter. You cannot trust yourself and you cannot trust anybody else who might have any kind of personal involvement or who might be impacted by the action to be taken as a result of the advice being sought. To delude oneself into thinking, "Yes, I will be able to overcome it" is the mistake that the *Meraglim* made.

This is precisely Moshe Rabbeinu's fear. It is Kalev's fear. The Spies needed to walk a very thin line. At the end of the day, they failed. As the Zohar says, their personal agenda and *'negius'* did them in.

One Can Recognize His Own Greatness Without Being Arrogant

The final statement the Meraglim made concerning their report regarding what they saw in the Land of Israel was: "There we saw the Nephillim, the sons of a giant from among the Nephillim; we in our eyes like grasshoppers; and so too were we in their eyes." : 13:33

We have commented in past years – how did the spies know how they looked to the Canaanites? They were, after all, not mind readers. The answer we have given is that if one perceives himself as a grasshopper then that will be how others perceive him as well! To put it colloquially, "if you think you are a shmateh [rag], then that is how others will look at you as well."

This is an important lesson in life. We must have a certain level of confidence in who we are. No one should make the mistake to think (as some people do) that if I think I am not a grasshopper then I am being haughty. This is not a matter of arrogance. The definition of modesty is not to go around saying "I am nothing. I know nothing. I am a zero." The definition of appropriate modesty is to recognize

who I am and what talents I have, but not to be proud about it because I realize that it is all a gift from the Master of the World.

If a person has a beautiful voice and they ask him to daven as the Shliach Tzibur, he should not say "I cannot carry a tune." That would be patently untrue. But when he gets up to daven he should not think that he is deserving of great honor because he can sing so beautifully. The ability to sing is a gift from G-d and that is true of all the human abilities that a person may possess. We are charged to use the gifts G-d gives us appropriately in His service.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l was an extremely humble person. I am told that he was once getting into a car on the Lower East Side and someone on the street called out in a loud voice "Moshe!" (to someone else), but the Gadol Hador assumed it was he who was being addressed and asked "What can I do for you?"

Rav Moshe Feinstein was once at a wedding and a man approached him and asked him a question to which Rav Moshe gave him an answer. The young man raised his voice and asked a question on the answer Rav Moshe gave him and again received another answer. The young man raised his voice higher with each successive exchange. Until, finally Rav Moshe Feinstein led him aside and said to him, "Young man, I don't believe you understand who you are talking to!" Meaning, I am Rav Moshe Feinstein and you don't talk to me like that.

What about the humble Rav Moshe Feinstein on the Lower East Side who responded to someone who yelled out "Moshe"? This is not a contradiction. Rav Moshe Feinstein knew who he was.

Another time a young man asked Rav Moshe a question at a wedding and Rav Moshe gave him an answer. The young man asked, "Does the Rosh Yeshiva know that the Pri Megadim rules just the opposite?"

To which Rav Moshe answered, "Yes. I have learned that Pri Megadim 296 times." How could he talk like that if he was so modest? The same answer: He knew who he was.

I heard a story many years ago regarding the **Chasam Sofer**. There was a certain question regarding an Agunah [woman whose husband's death was doubtful] that became a cause célèbre and involved great Rabbinic opinions on both sides of the issue. The matter came to the Chasam Sofer. He thought about it, took out his pen and in a half hour wrote a responsa to permit the woman to remarry. They asked him, how he could be so bold and confident when it was such a controversial matter. He answered "I have the pen of authority in these matters in this generation." In others words, he could say about himself that he was the final word, and what he said about the matter was the definitive psak halacha. Finished.

These people were tremendously humble people but they knew who they were and they knew what the psak was and they were not afraid to exercise their authority. This is not haughtiness.

Seeing The 'Good' In Jerusalem

"And the entire congregation raised up and issued its voice; the people wept that night" [Bamidbar 14:1]. The Spies returned with their report about the Land of Israel. They testified that the inhabitants were stronger than them and that the Jews were incapable of conquering the land. The people cried that night.

To paraphrase Franklin Roosevelt, that was a night that would live in infamy. As the Talmud [Sanhedrin 104b] teaches, that night was the night of Tisha B'Av. G-d stated that since the Jews cried on that night for no reason, He would establish that night as a night of perpetual mourning throughout the generations.

Both Temples were destroyed on Tisha B'Av. In commemoration of those events, Jews throughout the generations remove their shoes, sit on the floor, and cry on that night.

When we cry on Tisha B'Av, we do not only think back to the start of World War I, which 'happened' to break out on Tisha B'Av. We do

not only think back to 1492 when the Jews were exiled from Spain on that date. We do not only think back to the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash [Temple] or even the destruction of the First Beis HaMikdash. When we sit on the floor on the night of Tisha B'Av and read from the Megilla of Eicha, we have to think back to the incident of the Spies. It all started with the Meraglim.

There is an interesting Medrash which addresses the anomaly in the alphabetically arranged pasukim in chapters 2, 3, and 4 of Eicha: In those chapters, the pasukim beginning with the letter 'Pay' precede the pasukim beginning with the letter 'Ayin'. (Chapter 1 follows the normal Aleph-Bet sequence of first Ayin and then Pay.)

The Medrash says that the letter Pay (which literally means 'mouth') precedes the letter Ayin (which literally means 'eye') to remind us that the Spies spoke with their mouths that which they did not see with their eyes.

We must consider, however, that the spies fabricated nothing when they spoke of seeing "Giants in the land". They were not lying when they reported having noticed that it was "a land that buries its inhabitants". Our Sages say that they in fact saw many funerals while they were spying out the land. So what is the meaning of the Medrash that says, "They reported with their mouths that which their eyes did not see"?

Rav Shimon Schwab (1908-1995) offers a beautiful interpretation of this Medrash: Two people can see the exact same occurrence and see two different things. It happens all the time. For example, the pasuk concerning the Akeidah [Binding of Isaac] says "And he saw the place from a distance" [Bereishis 22:4]. The Medrash comments that Avrohom saw the Shechina in the form of a cloud on top of the mountain. Avrohom asked his son Yitzchak if he saw the same thing. Yitzchak responded in the affirmative. Avrohom then asked Yishmael and Eliezer if they saw it. They responded that they only saw the mountain – nothing above it. They could not see the spiritual

phenomenon of the cloud encircling the top of the mountain. Avrohom then told them that they could proceed no further. "Stay here together with the donkeys" [22:5]. If they could see nothing but the physical, they had no right to accompany Avrohom and Yitzchak and view the Akeidah. (The word "chamor" – donkey, is related to the word "chomer," meaning "the physical.)

This was the problem with the Spies. Eretz Yisroel [the Land of Israel] is a different kind of land. It is the Land about which the Torah says, "the Eyes of the L-rd rest upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year" [Devorim 11:12]. However, not everyone sees that. Some people go to Eretz Yisroel and are merely overwhelmed with the fact that "It's so stony! There are rocks everywhere you look!" It is, however, possible to go to Eretz Yisroel and sense its uniqueness and its spirituality.

The Medrash is teaching that the Spies failed to see with their eyes that which is there to be seen in Eretz Yisroel. When they arrived at Mount Moriah, they merely saw 'a mountain'. They did not see the site of the Akeida, the site of the future Beis HaMikdash. When they came to Chevron, they saw just another city — they did not sense the presence of the Patriarchs who are buried there.

They spoke with their mouths. But they did not utilize their eyes to fully see and appreciate that which is there to be seen in Eretz Yisroel. This is what brought about their sin.

Eretz Yisroel must be viewed differently than other countries. If there is one eternal lesson from Parshas Shlach, it is that one must be very careful about how he perceives and certainly how he talks about Eretz Yisroel.

A listening ear is one of the loudest forms of kindness. ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)

Sheva Brochos Material

June is a popular month for weddings and I have had more than one person come over to me recently and ask, "Do you have a nice thought I can say over at a Sheva Brochos?" The following short thought from **Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky** is a nice idea to share at a Sheva Brochos.

In the beginning of Parshas Shlach, Moshe changed the name of Hoshea Bin Nun to Yehoshua [Bamidbar 13:16], saying (according to the Medrash) "May G-d save you from the counsel of the other spies" [Tanchuma 6; Sotah 34b]. Apparently, Moshe had a premonition that Yehoshua would need to stand up to the other Meraglim and therefore granted him this blessing.

Many ask why Moshe was only worried about Yehoshua. Why did Moshe not also feel it necessary to bless Kalev with extra fortitude to stand up to the bad counsel of the majority report of the other Mergalim?

Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky gives the following very interesting answer. Kalev was married to Miriam, who was a righteous woman. Knowing that he had a righteous wife, Moshe was confident that Kalev would be safe from bad influences. Yehoshua, as far as we know, was not married at that time. At this time, to the best of our knowledge, Yehoshua was still single. Since Yehoshua did not have a wife to back him up, it was he, rather than Kalev, who needed the blessing of "May G-d save you from the counsel of the spies".

If one needs to speak at a Sheva Brochos this month, let them take this thought and run with it (if the bride is worthy of this analogy).

"Make sure to include yourself in the list of things you need to take care of this week." ~ Based on the teachings of Hillel HaZaken (Midrash, Vayikra Rabbah 34:3)

A Chassidishe Ma'aseh With Three Lessons

There was a Jew in Czarist Russia named Rav Mendel, who was fantastically wealthy. He supported poor Jews in the Land of Israel. One of the people he supported sent him a bottle of wine from Eretz Yisrael. This was a time when for the Jews in Russia, the Land of Israel was a far off dream. Despite his great wealth, the bottle of wine from Eretz Yisrael was Rav Mendel's most precious commodity.

When Rav Mendel was about to die, he told his son: Here is my most precious possession — this bottle of wine from Eretz Yisrael. When there is a special occasion, I want you to open the wine, but not before.

It so happened that a day arrived several years later when the 8 sons of the Chernobler Maggid visited this little village. The 7 youngest sons of Reb Mordechai of Chernoble were known as the "Seven branches of the Menorah" and it was said about the oldest son, Reb Aharon of Chernoble, "Aharon stood above the other seven" (Shiva Kanei haMenorah v'Aharon omed al gabeihem).

The eight sons came to the village and held a Chassidic "Tish" for all the Jews in town. The son of Reb Mendel said to himself, "This is a special occasion!" He arrived at the Tish with his bottle of Eretz Yisrael wine and passed up the bottle from the back of the room towards the head table where the 8 Rebbes of Chernoble were sitting. He yelled toward the front of the room "Wine from Eretz Yisrael; Wine from Eretz Yisrael."

Reb Aharon Chernobler, the oldest son, opened the bottle, poured himself a glass, recited the "Borei Pri haGafen" blessing, and tasted the wine. "Ummm! Delicious!" he said. He praised the wine profusely and passed the bottle to his brother Reb Moshe of Koristchev. Reb Moshe poured himself a glass, recited the blessing, tasted the wine, licked his lips, and likewise praised the wine. The bottle was then passed down the table to the next brother, Reb Yakov-Yosef of Cherkass and the process was repeated. The protocol continued

with each of the brothers – Reb Menachem Nochum of Makarov, Reb Avraham of Trisk, Reb Dovid of Talne, and Reb Yitzchak of Skvira. Until finally, the bottle reached the youngest brother, Reb Yochanan of Rachmistrivka.

Reb Yochanan received the bottle. He did not pour himself a glass. He did not taste it. He passed the bottle down to the next person. The eldest brother, Reb Aharon, said to his youngest brother, Reb Yochanan "What is the matter with you? – you don't taste the wine from Eretz Yisrael?" Reb Yochanan responded to his brother: "You know that I am a wine connoisseur and that as soon as I taste wine, I can immediately detect its quality. I was afraid that I would taste the wine and that for a split second, it would not satisfy my refined pallet and I would think evil of Eretz Yisrael. I don't want to be guilty again for the sin of the Spies of not appreciating The Land of Israel!"

We learn several things from this story:

First, we learn how careful we must be about speaking ill against Eretz Yisrael. Reb Yochanan of Rachmistrivka not only did not want to say anything bad about Eretz Yisrael, he did not even want to think it, not even for a split second. Unfortunately, it is the nature of people to expose shortcomings and to ignore or take for granted what is good. We must keep reminding ourselves not to stumble and repeat the sin of the Spies.

The second thing we learn from this incident is how precious Eretz Yisrael was to men of spiritual stature in that era. A bottle of wine from Eretz Yisrael was an heirloom. It was something that was passed down from generation to generation. It was something that was only opened up on the most special of occasions.

Whoever is happy will make others happy.

Why the Calculation of "Forty Years for Forty Days"?

The Almighty pronounced the following terrible decree upon the Jewish people for the sin of the Spies: "Like the number of the days that you spied out the land, forty days, a day for a year, a day for a year, shall you bear your iniquities — forty years — and you shall know what parting from Me [is]" [Bamidbar 14:34].

Instead of moving on directly to the Land of Israel, they were to remain 40 years in the desert. Why 40 years? For every day the Spies were in *Eretz Yisrael* gathering their negative reports [i.e., according to the conventional way of understanding the Spies' actions, not the "deeper" approach outlined above], they would need to spend a corresponding 365-day period wandering in the desert before they could enter *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Asher Weiss asks a simple question. The actual sin of the Spies occurred when they returned and delivered their negative report, on that infamous *Erev Tisha B'Av*. The report was delivered in at most one day. For the previous 39 days or even for the entire 40-day period they did not report anything. They did not do any damage. They were merely gathering information. How then do we understand this correlation of 40 years for 40 days? Their sin lasted for at most one day, not 40 days!

It was not like today when they would be able to call back to the camp every day on their cell phones with bad tidings about the Land. They did not Twitter. They did not post updates on Facebook. There was not any communication whatsoever until they returned to the camp after the 40-day sojourn! They come back one day, they speak ill for a few hours at most and that is that. Why were they punished "a year for each day"?

Rav Asher Weiss answers by citing a rule we have cited many times in the past. The sin of *lashon harah* is not a sin only of the mouth. It is a sin of the eyes as well — a sin in how one perceives things. Two people can see virtually the same thing and view it in totally

different ways. The reason the punishment was "40 years for 40 days" is because for 40 days the Spies looked negatively at *Eretz Yisrael*. Everything they saw was processed with a jaundiced view.

Chazal say (again, according to the "simple interpretation") that the expression "A land that devours its inhabitants" reflects the fact that they saw funerals every day. Rather than seeing this as the Hand of G-d who wanted the inhabitants to be preoccupied with burying their dead so that they would not notice the spies, they saw it as a sign that the land was inhospitable and caused the premature death of its inhabitants.

For forty days, their perception was with a negative view. Therefore, when they came back and delivered their report to the nation, we are not talking about a sin whose duration was a few hours or at most a day. Their report was the climax of 40 complete days of jaundiced processing on their part of everything having to do with the Land of Israel. It was 40 days of misperception; 40 days of cynicism; 40 days of being negative; 40 days of *lashon harah*. The punishment for that was 40 years of wandering – a year for each day!

Rabbi Chaim Kofman shlit'a (Machsheves Halev) Said:

וַיַּעֲלוּ בַנֶּגְבָּה וַיָּבֹא עַד־חֶבְרוֹן - '***They*** *went up and* ***he*** *arrived in Chevron.'*

Why the change from plural to singular? **Rashi** tells us that Calev left the rest of the spies and traveled to Chevron to daven at **קברי אבות** so as not to fall into their evil design.

Calev found it necessary to negate the strong temptation of joining the **מרגלים** When a person is **מתפלל** by **קברי אבות**, the Zaidas and Bubbas will always answer his or her tefillos and a separate blessing was not needed from Moshe."

Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez לעילוי נשמת יהושע ע"ה בן ברוך הלוי נ"י

"כולם אנשים ראשי בני ישראל המה"[יג:ב]



Every man chosen by Moishe Rabbeinu to spy on Eretz Yisroel was a leader. They were handpicked by Moishe himself. [Medrash Tanchuma] The **Baal Haturim** writes that the word **"המה"** in our Pasuk is gematria 50, because each man chosen, was a leader over 50 people [**שרי המישים**]. What was the significance to Moishe Rabbeinu in the number 50?

The **זר הצבי** suggests that in the Tefillah of "Ahsrei" each Pasuk begins with another letter of the Aleph Beis. Every letter is represented besides for the letter [**נ**]. The Gemara in Mesechta Berochos [**ד:**] explains that the letter [**נ**] stands for **"נפילה"** and represents the *downfall* of Klal Yisroel. We don't want to mention the defeat of our nation.

Moishe chose leaders over 50, as a Remez that these spies were going to *fall* and deliver evil reports about the land. He chose men whom he felt were already **"אנשי נפילה"** "Men of spiritual descent". This number 50 is also hinted to right at the beginning- **"שלח לך אנשים"** The Meraglim were destined for failure. The **"נפילה"** would happen. [**ספר מתוקים מדבש**]



Reb Shmuel Donn- Remez

וימצאו איש מקשש עצים ביום השבת....ועשו להם ציצית [טו:לב-לח]

Rashi explains that the Parsha of **ציצית** is written immediately after the Parsha of the man who was **מחלל שבת** to teach us that just like **שבת** is equal to all 613 Mitzvos- So too the **מצוה** of **ציצית** is equal to all the Mitzvos in the Torah! **שבת** and **ציצית** are equally as important.. [רש"י פסוק מ"א].

Says the **Vilna Gaon** זצ"ל the Remez can be found in the number of times our **ציצית** are wrapped around between the five knots- 7,8,11,13 =39 corresponding to the 39 Melachos of **שבת**!

Our perception



We need to see the world and all it contains in a positive light. We should see it the way Hashem does, as He said it is **כי טוב מאד** - very good. In every place the Meraglim passed they found them burying the dead. However, this was really for their benefit as it was in order to distract the **כנענים** with their mourning so that they shouldn't notice the spies. We need to notice all the good Hashem does for us. With positive thinking and being grateful we remove ourselves from negativity. The more we accustom ourselves with thoughts of gratitude the more it becomes our nature.

In light of what we said we can now explain the Pasuk **ושמחת בכל הטוב אשר נתן לך ה' אלקיך** - as we should be happy with what Hashem gave each of us. The saying goes "If you are not happy with what you have, you won't be happy with what you get."

The Mishna teaches **איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו** - who is wealthy, the one who is happy with his lot. If we look at our body at what we possess we see truly how wealthy we are: eyes to see- which is more sophisticated than the best camera, teeth to chew and grind up the food, hands to take care of our many tasks, feet to walk with and so on.

The Chida shows us how this is hinted to in the word **עשיר** - he says it is an acronym for **עינים שינים ידים רגלים**. Thus **עשיר** are the same letters as **יש רע** since although he has **רע** in his life he still sees the good.

The expression goes "A man was sad he had no shoes until he saw a man with no feet." Indeed, **בשמחה** and **מחשבה** are composed of the same letters since being happy is dependent on our thoughts. "Everyone is looking for the city of happiness, but it is all in the state of mind."

"Happiness is not determined by a set of circumstances rather by a set of attitudes." **R' Pam** would say this is the idea behind **מעשר בהמה** in which 9 animals are counted and the 10th one is designated for Hashem. Once we count 9 and we see how much we have, it makes it easier for us to give away one.

At times when we are feeling down it would do us well if we would act as we do when we are happy. How do we breathe, talk and walk when we are happy? What is our facial expression? Acting this way even if we don't feel it, will put us in a good mood. This is because **התנועה החיצונה מעוררת הפנימית** - our externals arouse our internals. In the words of the Sefer Hachinuch - **אדם נפעל כפי פעולתיו** - man is influenced according to his actions.

As the Chovos Halvovos puts it- **מחשבה נמשכת אחר הדבור** - our thoughts follow after our speech.

We should all merit to realize what we truly possess and be genuinely happy.

Life Extension



R' Yaakov Yitzchak Rabinowitz, also known as the Yid Hakadosh, was the founder of the Peshischa sect of Chasidim in Przysucha, Poland. He was a disciple of the **Chozeh of Lublin**, and the teacher of **R' Simcha Bunim of Peshischa**, to whom was passed the helm of his movement. Peshischa Chassidus continued and transformed itself through many different branches-Kotzk, Ger, Alexander, and many others.

The Sefas Emes says that the Yehudi Hakadosh (Yid Hakadosh) from Peshischa was called so because he grew and elevated himself daily like the level from a non-Jew to a Jew. The difference of the old level to the new one each day was the same difference of a non-Jew to a Jew.

The Yid Hakadosh would go to the Mikva after Chatzos at night when it was cold. Following that he would learn throughout the night.

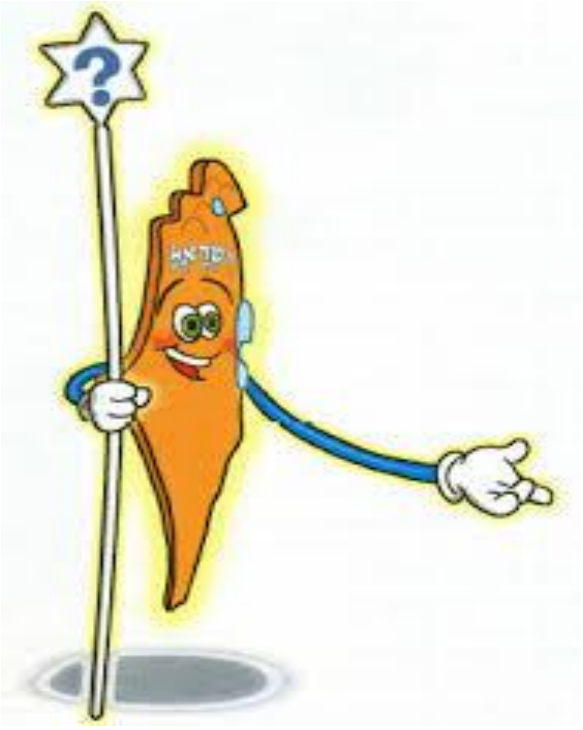
Earlier in his life when he was in Peshischa and very sick, his son went to the **Chozeh of Lublin** for his father. The Chozeh told him

that the Yid Hakadosh is sick because he had fulfilled his purpose in this world and he is now ready to leave this world.

He said, however, that there is something that can be done: **שלח לך אנשים ויתרו** - send him men (that will be his Chassidim) and then he will get years added (**ויתרו**) onto his life. That is, he will have a new purpose- to be a leader. Also, **ויתרו** is related to the word **תורה**, meaning he will develop a new Derech in Torah and Avodas Hashem.

That is what happened and he lived longer. The Yid Hakadosh passed away on the 19th of Tishrei in 1813 at the age of 48. **The Ruzhiner** remarked he died younger than us all, but he was greater than us all.

Land of Ascension



When one, for example, wants to plant an apple tree, he doesn't just do so anywhere. Rather, it must be in the proper setting- with the right type of soil and the like. The same applies to us as for a Jew to grow spiritually, he needs the proper setting. That setting is Eretz Yisrael.

In the Gemara, when one goes to Eretz Yisrael it says **כי סליק להתם** - when he goes up to there, whereas when one goes to Bavel the term **נחית** - descend, is used.

This alludes to that in Eretz Yisrael, one has the ability to ascend to spiritual heights whereas in **חוץ לארץ** one can be susceptible to falling in spirituality.

R' Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg once remarked that in **חוץ לארץ**, you believe there is **רוחניות** – spirituality, whereas in Eretz Yisrael, you feel it.

In this way, we can comprehend the Pasuk about Eretz Yisrael which states **עלו אשר והאנשים** - those in Eretz Yisrael have the potential for a spiritual elevation that comes from just being there.

It is in Eretz Yisrael where the honour of Hashem is found. An allusion is to this is the following: If we take the word **כבוד** - which has a Gematria of 32- and multiply it by 26 (the sum of Hashem's name **י-ה-ו-ה**, we arrive at a total of 832. This is the numerical value of **ארץ ישראל** !

In light of this we can understand why **אין תורה כתורת ארץ ישראל** - there is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael. In the words of the Gemara: **אוירא דארץ ישראל מחכים** - the air of Eretz Yisrael makes one wise.

Yesurim

The Ben Ish Chai *zt'l* (*Ben Yohoyada*) says that it is very hard to be happy with *yesurim*, but there is a thought to keep in mind, which makes it easier. Think about how the *yesurim* is really for a short time, and because of them - the *yesurim*, he will earn eternal good.

With this thought in mind, he can try to reach a level of *simcha* even though he has *yesurim*.

The Ben Ish Chai writes, "He is happy because he realizes that the **וי** (the woe and hardships) are only **שעה** , for a short time. And then he will merit salvation. **וי שעה** spells **ישועה**. With a moment of woe, one merits salvation."

"Every day a person is given new tests suited to his strength. If he pays attention, each one becomes an opportunity to serve Hashem anew." ~ Chofetz Chaim.

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Keeping Yehoshua in mind



1) Rashi tells us that Moshe davened for Yehoshua to be saved from the plot of the Meraglim. Why did Moshe only daven for Yehoshua and not Kalev?

2) Targum Yehonoson Ben Uziel says when Moshe saw Yehoshua's humility, he called him יהושע - הושע adding the י (davening for him). What is the connection between these two?

The name כלב is related to כלב (dog) which represents Chutzpa as we say הני כלבין דחציפין - brazen dogs. So he could stand up against the Meraglim. We also see this trait in Kalev's son- Chur. He stood up against the crowd by the Eigel and was thus killed. With this we can comprehend יגדל נא כח ה' as they magnified Hashem by taking a stand for Him. Is it any surprise that כח are the first letters of כלב חור.

However, Yehoshua possess a different quality. He is known as the משרת משה - servant of Moshe. He is compared to the moon whereas Moshe is compared to the sun. Moshe is the most humble man that

lived. The outcome of this is- that Yehoshua being so devout to Moshe, now possesses the trait of humility on an extraordinary level. Therefore, it was difficult for Yehoshua to go against the stream.

Yehoshua understood this. The name **יהושע בין נון** can also be understood in a different light. **בין** is derived from **בינה**; understanding. **נון** refers to the letter **נ** which the Gemara tells us symbolizes **נפילה**. Yehoshua understood that from the Meraglim he could have a **נפילה**. For this reason, Moshe davened for Yehoshua specifically.

Humble Or Tumble



To tap into and feel the holiness of Eretz Yisrael, humility and submission to Hashem is required, as it says **וענוים יירשו ארץ** - the humble shall inherit Eretz Yisrael.

With this we can grasp **שלח לך** - send men to spy out the land, to which Rashi says **לדעתך** - at your discretion. A deeper meaning in **לדעתך** is that Hashem was telling Moshe send people that are connected to your mind and traits- that of being humble as Moshe was an **ענו מאד מכל האדם** - the most humble man.

Based on what we mentioned, we can comprehend why the Meraglim didn't merit Eretz Yisrael as the Pasuk testifies **כלם אנשים ראשי בני ישראל המה** - they were great Tzadikim but **ראשי בני ישראל המה** - they were haughty, being deficient in this area of humility.

With this we can understand the Zohar that the spies wanted to prevent us from entering Eretz Yisrael since they felt they wouldn't remain the leaders anymore once we would enter. This was because they knew the trait of humility is needed for Eretz Yisrael and since they were deficient in this area, they wouldn't be able to be the leaders.

Who did enter Eretz Yisrael? Kalev and Yehoshua, who possessed humility.

This is shown to us by Kalev in **כלב עקב היתה רוח אחרת עמו ועבדי** as **עקב** refers to humility as in **עקב ענוה**. As for Yehoshua, the Targum Yehonasan Ben Uziel remarks **וכדי חמא משה ענוותניותיה** - when Moshe saw his humility, he called Hoshea Yehoshua.

The Place To Daven

To be saved from being persuaded by the **עצת מרגלים** - designs of the Megalim, Kalev davened at the **קברי אבות** - graves of the Avos- at the **מערת המכפלה** in Chevron.

Indeed, the **Baal Haturim** points out that the end letters of **חמת ויעלו בנגב ויבא** - "they ascended in the south and he arrived at Chevron" 13:21-22, spell **אבות** .

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

It is said in the name of the Ksav Sofer, zt"l, "When someone thinks about what happened until now, that is the work of the Yetzer Hara. - When one focuses on the present and the future, that is work of the Yetzer Tov!"

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The Meraglim Lacked Bitachon



The Rebbe of Piazescna zt'l (אש קודש) teaches, "When a person doesn't see any opening or path which seem possible using his sechel and according to the rules of nature, that can save him from his troubles and predicaments, he should place his trust in Hashem and increase his emunah and bitachon."

He said this in the Warsaw Ghetto to the people who wanted to escape but didn't see any way possible to do so. He said, "At times like these, it is better that one shouldn't seek to save himself via natural means because he probably won't find them, and then his bitachon will become weaker. Rather, one should say… 'Hashem is above the laws of nature and He will save me.'"

The meraglim (spies) told the Jewish nation that there are giants living in the land of Eretz Yisroel and their cities are heavily fortified. The Yidden understood, correctly, that according to the rules of nature, it was impossible for them to win this war. So, they began to panic. Kalev silenced the nation and told them that Hashem will help them. As it states, **ויהס כלב את העם אל משה ויאמר עלה נעלה וירשנו אתה כי יכול נוכל לה**, "Kalev silenced the nation…and said, 'We will go up. We will inherit the land because we can.'"

The Piazescna zt"l takes note that Kalev didn't explain to them how they could conquer the land, because he didn't know. But he was

certain that Hashem can do anything. We can therefore trust in Him, and He will save us.

The Piazescna zt"l teaches that everyone should think this way. Whenever one finds himself in a difficult situation where a path to salvation seems hopeless, he should tell himself, "Hashem can save me, and He is above the rules of nature. I don't have to see how. I trust in Him."

It shouldn't have been hard for the Yidden to believe that Hashem will help them conquer Eretz Yisrael in miraculous ways. It wouldn't be the first miracle Hashem performed for them. Just a year and five months before, Hashem saved them from Mitzrayim with many, wonderous miracles. They lived in the desert where they ate manna that fell from heaven and they drank water that gushed forth from a stone. They were protected by the clouds of glory. They witnessed the miracles of *matan Torah*. They weren't strangers to miracles. So why was it hard for them to believe that Hashem would give them Eretz Yisrael with miracles?

The Sifsei Tzaddikim (from Rebbe Pinchas Madinovitz *zt'l*) replies, "They sullied their souls with several sins: the golden calf, the מתאוננים, and others, and they were convinced that they didn't deserve any more *Nissim* from Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

This was their mistake! They forgot that Hashem always loves His nation.

The Sifsei Tzaddikim explains that Hashem commanded, **שלח לך אנשים** - send spies into Eretz Yisrael, because Hashem wanted the nation to hear about the giants living there and about the fortified cities, so that they should know that even after their severe sins, Hashem will perform miracles for them.

His attachment and love to them remains intact, forever. But the nation became afraid, and the opportunity was lost.

As the Sifsei Tzaddikim writes, "Hashem told them to send *meraglim*…so they would see the giants living there and they will know that they can't win the wars according to nature. And, nevertheless, they will enter the land and they will be granted Eretz Yisrael. This would teach them that Hashem always has compassion on His children. He makes miracles for them because of His love for them."

The Sfas Emes writes, "My grandfather, the **Chidushei HaRim *zt'l***, said, "As far as they understood, it was impossible for them to conquer Eretz Yisrael. But if they would believe in Hashem… the belief, itself, would help them go above the boundaries of nature… [and they would be able to conquer Eretz Yisrael]."

It states (*Tehillim* 121:1), **אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא עזרי**, "I raise my eyes to the mountains; from where will come my salvation?" The chapter refers to a person who doesn't see any hope on the horizon. He doesn't see any solutions for his troubles. But, **עזרי מעם ה' עושה שמים וארץ** - "My help will come from Hashem, Who created heaven and earth." Hashem created heaven and earth from nothingness, **יש מאין**, and He can also find, and, if need be, create, a solution for me.

Tzitzis



This week's *parashah* discusses the wonderful, holy mitzvah of tzitzis. The Torah writes

והיה לכם לציצת... וזכרתם את כל מצות ה' "It will be for you tzitzis…and you will remember all of Hashem's mitzvos." (15:39)

How does tzitzis remind us of the mitzvos? Rashi writes, "The *gematriya* of **ציצית** is 600. There are eight strings and five knots.

Together, that's 613." That is how looking at the tzitzis reminds us of the 613 mitzvos.

The Ramban (15:32) writes, "I didn't understand this Rashi, because ציצת is written without the second יו"ד , and is only *gematriya* 590…" It isn't *gematriya* 600.

Some answer that since we read it as though there were two יו"ד s in ציצית , the second יו"ד can be included in this *gematriya* (see *Sifsei Chachamim*).

Rebbe Chenoch of Bendin *zt'l* answers that whenever there is one יו"ד - Yid, there is another יו"ד, Yid, with him because a Yid is never alone. Because of the mitzvah of *Ahavas Yisrael*, Yidden are always together, caring for each other. So if one יו"ד is mentioned in the *pasuk*, automatically another Yid is certainly there too, and then we have a *gematriya* of 600.

Using another approach, Rebbe Chanoch of Bendin answers that the י is counted as though it was spelled out in full: יו"ד, those three letters are *gematriya* 20. Thus, the *gematriya* of ציצת is indeed 600. The reason we count the יו"ד as though it was spelled out is because the essence of a Yid is his inside. It isn't his externals that are unique, it's his inside [his heart, his devotion] that really count. That is why we count the *miluy* [the

inside letters, which represent the] inside of a Yid.

After the Holocaust, the **Klausenberger Rebbe *zt'l*** would go around to many different DP camps. One day, the Rebbe came to a camp that had 150 survivors and said that he has one pair of tzitzis from America, and they would make a *gorel* to see who gets it.

The survivors hadn't performed this mitzvah for a long time, and they all wanted the opportunity. **Reb Mendel Tchipek**, a Gerer chassid, ripped his shirt in a way that obligated his garment with tzitzis. He said to the Rebbe, "My garment now has four corners, so I am obligated from the Torah to wear tzitzis. I should receive it."

The Rebbe was visibly impressed by his *mesirus nefesh*, but he still couldn't give him the tzitzis, since everyone present also desired the tzitzis. The Rebbe told him, "Since you want the tzitzis so much, you will probably win the *gorel*." He did!

A chassid of **Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zt'l*** had an only child, who wanted to marry a gentile woman. The parents brought their son to Rebbe Yissacher Dov and expressed their anguish. The boy stated clearly to his parents and to the Rebbe that no matter what the Rebbe would tell him, he would still marry that girl.

"I won't try to stop you," the Rebbe said. "But I have a request: I want you to wear a *tallis kattan* under your clothing at the wedding. I also want your father to attend your wedding."

Wearing a *tallis kattan* was a tiny sacrifice, which he was willing to do. Especially since this would bring his father to his wedding. At the wedding there was a lot of drinking. The groom became hot from the alcohol and took off his jacket and unbuttoned his shirt. His tzitzis were revealed. "He fooled us," the crowd jeered. "He's still a Jew!"

They began beating him up. The father quickly took his son out of the hall, away from danger. (That was apparently the reason the Rebbe advised the father to be at the wedding.) This wondrous story is an example of how the mitzvah of tzitzis saved someone from sinning.

"Behind every smile is an untold struggle. Be the reason why someone feels included, welcomed, supported, safe, and valued – sometimes the smallest kindness can bring someone the greatest comfort." ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810)

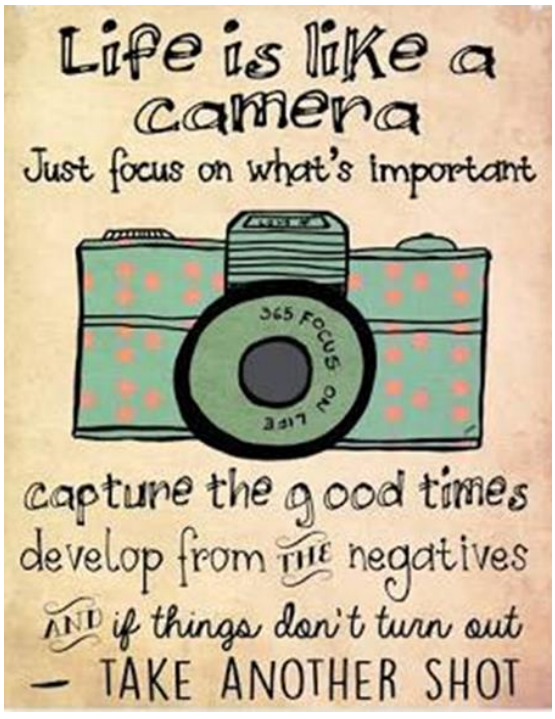
Diplomacy

וַיַּהַס כָּלֵב אֶת־הָעָם אֶל־מֹשֶׁה "And Kalev silenced the people to/against Moshe ... " (13:30).

How did he do that? He announced at the top of his voice, says Rashi 'Is that all ben Amram did to/for us?'

Whoever heard him thought that he was about to attack Moshe (since the words "el Moshe" can mean 'against Moshe' just as it can mean 'on behalf of Moshe').

In order to gain the support of the other spies, he referred to Moshe as 'the son of Amram', and as it is well-known, that is the way one usually speaks about a person whom one hates (like King Shaul, who, in the Haftarah of 'Machar Chodesh', twice refers to David as 'ben Yishai'). Once he had their rapt attention, Kalev continued with a list of Moshe's positive achievements on behalf of K'lal Yisrael, demonstrating on whose side he really was. *(based on the explanation of R. Ya'akov mi'Lisa).*



Which Side Do You See?

Two people may be in the same place doing the same thing, have an equal amount of money and prestige and yet one may be miserable and the other one happy. Why? Because of a different mental attitude.

"Your attitude determines your altitude on life." Do we see the cup half empty or half full? A wise man sees it half full. In fact, the word חכם forms an acronym of חצי כוס מלא - seeing the cup half full. The formula for happiness is simple: focus on what you have, and you will be happy.

When **R' Zelig Pliskin** was doing research for his book Gateway to Happiness, he asked a certain Torah scholar what he has to say about sadness. His immediate reply was- "the world is so beautiful; how can anyone be sad?" This is in contrast to someone he spoke to a few days earlier who remarked, "how can anyone be happy? The world is so filled with problems and misfortunes?"

So, two people living in the same city at the same time can live entirely different worlds although they both have the potential to view the world in the same light. Both are healthy and have their basic needs met but their perspectives of daily events are vastly different. One's world is beautiful and full of opportunities for growth while the other's is the opposite.

One who has a negative attitude on life loses out. Moreover, who wants to be around such a person? We must keep in mind "when you harbour bitterness, happiness will dock elsewhere."

It should be a powerful deterrent to be sad when we consider the following: By being sad one loses out on health, enjoying life, friends, closeness to Hashem, quality of his learning and so on. One should therefore avoid sadness at all costs. We should constantly ask ourselves what can I do to make myself happy?

Rebbtizen Chaya Sarah Kramer who was childless and poor but always happy was asked how she could be so happy in such a situation. She retorted *should I be childless, poor and miserable?!*

We should instil within us the motto- "the only disability in life is a bad attitude." The quality of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts. "All happiness is in the mind!"

In light of this we can explain **מי האיש החפץ חיים אהב ימים לראות טוב** as who is the one who desires life and loves his days? The answer is **לראות טוב** - the one who sees the good in everything.

The Tzitzis That Stayed Intact - Hamodia

The Torah (Bamidbar 15:40) teaches us about the mitzvah of tzitzis "l'maan tizkeru — so that you may remember and perform all My mitzvos."

Tuesday, April 9, 2019 ד' ניסן תשע"ט

As reported in detail in the Features section, after 37 years of *davening*, hoping, and waiting, the body of Zecharia Baumel, *Hy"d,* who was killed in 1982 in Lebanon, was located, positively identified and brought to *kever Yisrael* on Thursday in Yerushalayim. Zecharia Baumel — or Zach, as his parents and friends called him — was born and raised in Boro Park, Brooklyn , along with his, along with his older brother and sister.



Zecharia Baumel, Hy"d.

He was 10 years old when his parents decided to move to Eretz Yisrael. He went on to learn in Yeshivat Har Etzion in Gush Etzion and was serving in the *hesder* military track when he fell in battle.

From the time of his son's disappearance until his own *petirah* 10 years ago, his father, Yona Baumel, *z"l,* devoted all his energies into trying to locate his son.

"I have been sent a test from Above, and with it, a mission. I withstood the test. Now I always want to provide results as part of my mission," Reb Yona told his family before his passing.

Last week it was revealed what had happened when the small group of members of the Israeli Military Rabbinate, who had flown to

Russia for this purpose, got to examine the remains the Russians had exhumed in a cemetery in the Al Yarmouk refugee camp in southern Damascus. They knew that the Russians had found a number of bodies, and now it was up to them to try and determine if any of them belonged to missing IDF soldiers.

Their work was relatively quick. When they opened the first set of remains, they were stunned. The body was dressed in the overalls of an Israeli tank operator, and the overalls bore Hebrew letters. But what drew their attention and immediately revealed the secret were the soldier's *tzitzis*, which, despite the passage of decades, were still intact.

How fitting it is that in the merit of *tzitzis*, he was able to be positively identified.

The moving story of the still-intact *tzitzis* of Zecharia Baumel symbolizes the eternal impact of this most lofty *mitzvah*.

As we continue to *daven* for all the remaining Jewish MIAs, may the family of Zecharia Baumel be comforted among the mourners of Tzion and Yerushalayim, and may all Jews gain inspiration from the story of his *tzitzis*.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

Someone who was serving in the Polish army asked the **Imrei Emes** for a pair of tefillin. The Imrei Emes gave him the tefillin he inherited from his great-grandfather, the **Chidushei HaRim**.

People asked the Imrei Emes why he gave away those precious tefillin. He replied, it is written, כָּל־חֵלֶב לַה׳ Vayikra 3:16) and the Gemara learns from these words that one should always give away the best for a mitzvah. "These tefillin are the best I have, so I wanted to give them away for the mitzvah."

Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l, -Optical Delusion

Parshas Shelach discusses the tragic story of the twelve meraglim. The spies, each one a leader of his shevet, scouted the land of Israel and returned with a grim report. This incident comes on the heels of another sad occurrence. The previous parsha ends with the story of how Miriam, the brother of Moshe and Ahron, spoke wrongly about her brother Moshe, and was punished with tzora'as.



Rashi explains that the Torah tells us the story of the spies immediately following the story of Miriam, to teach us where the spies went wrong. Miriam was punished for her bad speech, yet "These evil ones (the spies) saw and did not take a lesson."

Why is there an emphasis on the spies "seeing" Miriam?

Dan, a lab technician in a hospital had forgotten to check some sort of mechanism on a piece of expensive equipment he used, causing it to malfunction and break. The cost of the repair was a hefty sum of $250,000!

The next day, Dan's boss called him in to talk about the incident. Dan walked nervously into his boss's office, prepared to be fired. His boss looked at him solemnly, and asked, "Why didn't you check the equipment before you used it?" Dan, embarrassed and nervous, just gently apologized.

His boss then looked up at him and sent him back to work. Dan asked him "Am I not getting fired? I was almost sure that's what this was about." His boss answered. "I just spent $250,000 teaching you a lesson you'll never forget. Why would I fire you now?"

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained. We are not perfect. We all sin. Many times, we simply don't realize the severity of what we are doing wrong. Sometimes we don't even realize that what we are doing is wrong!

But the Torah is teaching us that these meraglim made a much graver mistake. They just witnessed the severity of bad speech, but their heart did not internalize it. The occurrence of Miriam happened clearly in front of their eyes, yet they chose not to learn from that.

Not always does someone see an open punishment from G-d when someone sins. But in this case, they actually saw Miriam suffer the consequences of slander, yet they allowed their hearts to be immune to that. Thus, their sin was truly grave, and they sadly, went down in history as reshaim - evil ones.

May we all take a positive lesson and do just the opposite. Let us learn how to be inspired when we witness the greatness all around us!

Living Jewish

כֻּל נָשִׂיא בָהֶם Everyone a ruler ("nasi") among them (Num. 13:2)

The Hebrew word **נָשִׂיא** is composed of the words **אנ** ("nothing") and **יש** ("something"). A Jewish leader who is humble and considers himself "nothing" is the only kind of leader who is truly "something." Likewise, one who thinks he is "something" is not a leader at all. *(Degel Machane Efraim)*

Only In Israel by Rav Yissochor Frand

Parshas Shlach reminds us that whenever we speak about the Land of Israel, we must always say טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד "The land is very very good". [Bamidbar 14:7]. It is very easy to find fault. Unfortunately there are always things about which it is easy to be critical. But we need to 'see the good in Jerusalem' [Tehillim 128:5]. We must always try to see the good and not speak ill of Eretz Yisrael.

The following true story – which could only happen in Eretz Yisrael – speaks to the very special status of Eretz Yisrael and the very special mentality that could only exist in the holy land. I heard this story from Rav Aharon Feldman.



A grandfather came to visit Eretz Yisrael and took his little grandson out to eat in a Jerusalem restaurant. As their luck would have it, this was the same day that Bill Clinton (who was President of the United States at that time) was in Jerusalem. On an unplanned stop, the Clinton entourage went into this very restaurant for a bite to eat. What better photo-op is there than to have President Clinton eating a bagel and lox sandwich in the holy city of Jerusalem?

The grandfather and grandson were sitting in the restaurant when suddenly, the Secret Service, the President of the United States, CNN, and the entire entourage walked into the restaurant. Bill Clinton ordered his bagel and lox, and took a couple of bites which were duly recorded by the cameras. It was a real Kodak moment!

Clinton then noticed the grandfather and grandson in the restaurant. He approached the little Yerushalmi boy and said, "Hello. My name is Bill Clinton. What is your name?" The boy told the President his name, they had a brief conversation, and then Clinton and his entourage departed.

A few moments later, the grandfather asked his grandson, "Do you know that you just met the President of the United States?" To which the little boy responded,…… **"Yes, but I still have never met Rav Elyashiv"!**

Yes, Grasshoppers!

וַנְּהִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כַּחֲגָבִים וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם: *"And we were in our eyes like grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes* (13:33).



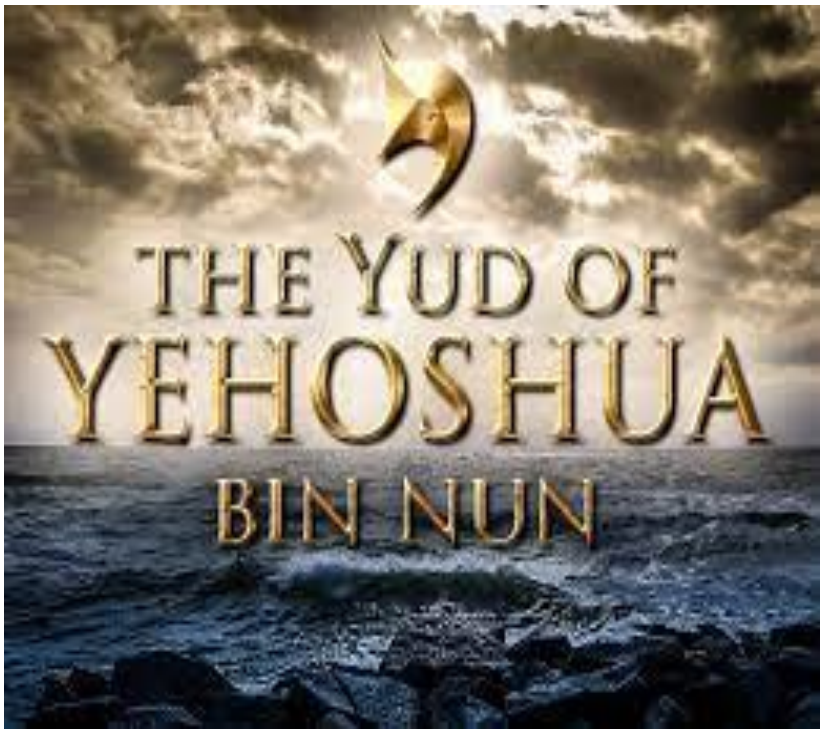
The P'ninei mi'Shulchan ha'Gro citing the G'ro, explains that the Cana'anim considered the Spies to be real grasshoppers (not just men who were as small as grasshoppers). And he extrapolates this from Rashi, who quotes the Spies as having said 'We heard them (the giants) saying that there are grasshoppers in the vineyards that resembling humans (and not the other way round).

That explains why they said 'And we were like grasshoppers in our eyes ... ', rather than " ...small in our own eyes ... '

Parshah Pearls by Rabbi Eliezer Chrysler -

When 'Ben' became 'Bin'

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בִּן־נוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ***"And Moshe called Hoshei'a bin Nun, Yehoshua"*** (13:16).



Why, one is bound to ask, does the Torah change the word "ben" to "bin"?

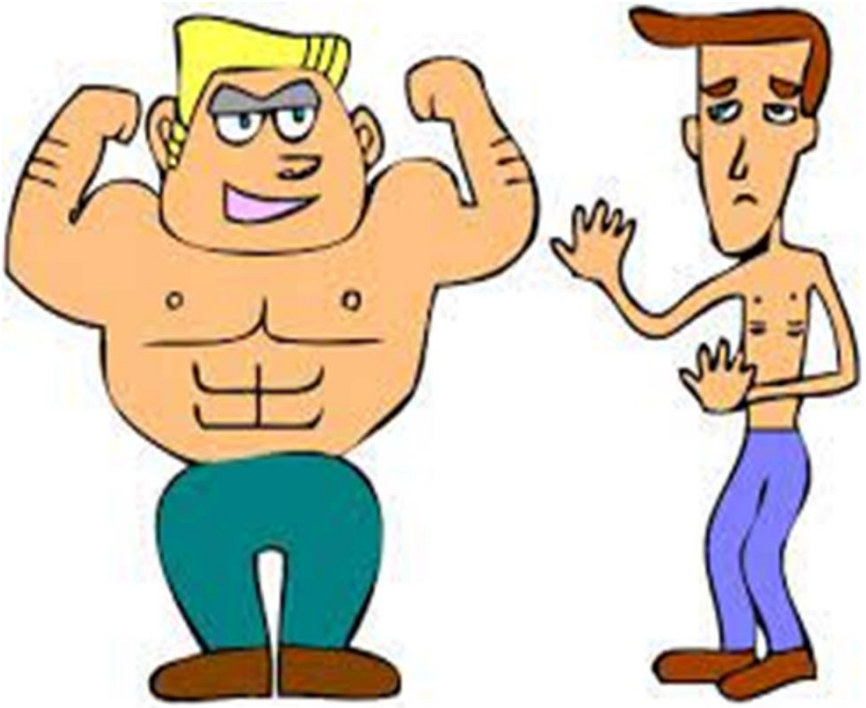
The P'ninei Torah, citing his grandfather, answers with the Medrash that the 'Yud' in Yehoshua came from Sarah, who had originally been called Sarai. When her name was changed, the 'Yud' complained at having been removed from the Torah, whereupon G-d reassured it that He would reinsert it in the name of another Tzadik - Yehoshua, and what's more, it would be elevated from the end of the Tzadik's name to the beginning!

The difficulty remains however, where the two dots of the 'Sh'vo'of Yehoshua come from (seeing as the 'Yud' in Sarai possessed no vowels). The answer is that G-d took them from the 'ben' in what should have been "ben Nun", leaving us with "bin Nun" instead!

"Shabbos is a taste of the world to come, a day of peace and tranquillity in which we can escape the hustle and bustle of daily life and connect with the eternal." ~ Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik.

Survival of the Fittest

אֶרֶץ אֹכֶלֶת יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ הִוא וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־רָאִינוּ בְתוֹכָהּ אַנְשֵׁי מִדּוֹת "It is a land that consumes its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw inside it were men of measure" (13:32).



Surely, asks the **Ohel Ya'akov**, this is self-contradictory? If a land kills its inhabitants, then one would expect all the residents to be weak and emaciated (at death's door, as it were)? If everybody who lives there is strong, is that not a sign of good health and physical strength?

The Ohel Ya'akov explains that with regard to all creations, one expects to find among each species, large and small ones, strong weak ones. That being the case, a person who came across a forest for example, containing large trees, would assume that a powerful storm must have destroyed all the small trees, and that only the large trees were able to survive. Likewise, the Meraglim argued, a plague must have hit Eretz Cana'an, and it was only the fittest who were able to survive – boding ill for anyone who planned to live there.

"When you waste a moment, you have killed it in a sense, squandering an irreplaceable opportunity. But when you use the moment properly, filling it with purpose and productivity, it lives on forever." - R Menachem Mendel Schneerson

Mirror Image



וַנְּהִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כַּחֲגָבִים וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם *"we were like grasshoppers in our own eyes and so we were in theirs"* (13:33).

That's how it works, says the **Chidushei ha'Rim.** The way a person sees himself, that's how others perceive him. Someone who has no self-respect, is not esteemed by others either. Because the spies were like grasshoppers in their own eyes, that's why the Cana'anim saw them that way too.

Rabbi Peysach Krohn- Project Mesorah



In the parsha this week, the Torah discusses the Aveiro of the *meraglim*. Of course, they spoke *loshon hora* against Eretz Yisrael and discouraged people from wanting to go there. Because of the 40 days that they spent there, klal Yisrael were punished with 40 years in the *midbar*.

Rav Chaim Shmualevitch why were the Yidden punished 40 years for the 40 days? After all, the meraglim only spoke loshon hora once? They only spoke loshon hora for one day and not for 40 days. So the punishment should have only been for one year.

Rav Chaim's answer gives us very great insight.

These meraglim were looking for anything to say bad about Eretz Yisrael. Some meforshim say that they had an ulterior motive, because they realized that they would no longer be the heads of the shevet if they were to go into Eretz Yisrael, as new leaders would be appointed. So they were specifically looking for the bad. But be it as it may, if you look for the bad, eventually, you are going to find bad, and you are going to say terrible things, that leads to the Aveiro of loshon hora.

I think that the lesson this week, especially in these difficult times, is that we have to try to look for the good as much as possible. Don't only talk about the negative, which brings discouragement to people, and leads to loshon hora, but be positive, and talk about the good. The intention gets punished as well as the actual deed.



***רֵאשִׁית עֲרִסֹתֵיכֶם חַלָּה תָּרִימוּ תְרוּמָה You must separate the first portion of your kneading* – 'arisa' - as a dough offering.** (Num. 15:20)

There are two meanings to the word "arisa." The first is the kneading trough in which dough is made, and the second is a child's cradle. This verse teaches us that one should pay particular attention to a child's education while he is still in the cradle. For even when they are so tiny it is our duty to educate them as Jews, and not to postpone it until a later time. *(Chasam Sofer)*



Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Feeling Safe in our Father's Hands!

הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבַרְנוּ בָהּ לָתוּר אֹתָהּ אֶרֶץ אֹכֶלֶת יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ הִוא "... The land through which we passed… is a land that eats up its inhabitants…." (Bamidbar 13:32)



Six-year-old Chani walked onto the airplane all by herself. The nearby passengers decided to keep an eye on her to make sure she would be safe. Suddenly, the plane began to shake because they were flying through bad weather.

Many people on the plane became nervous. Chani remained totally calm. Suddenly the plane began bouncing up and down from the strong winds. Many of the passengers grew more and more nervous. Some started crying. Others began to pray. Chani was totally calm and resumed playing with her doll as if nothing was happening.

The plane finally passed through the bad weather and landed in Israel. When the plane landed, one of the passengers turned to Chani and asked, "You are alone on this plane. How did you stay so calm during all that terrible weather?" Chani answered, "My father is the pilot. He is the best pilot in the whole world, and he is taking me home. Why should I be afraid?"

All of us are like young children in the hands of our father, Hashem. When we believe that, we will always feel safe, no matter what is happening around us. (*story from Living Emunah by Rabbi David Ashear)*

The Jewish People were on their way to enter the Land of Israel. They approached Moshe and requested permission to spy-out the land before going to conquer it from the nations that lived there. Hashem knew that wherever the Jewish spies would go they would be noticed. In order to protect the spies, Hashem performed a miracle. Wherever the spies went there were huge funerals. The people living there were too occupied with the funerals to even notice the Jewish spies. Hashem had caused the deaths of the leaders of the non-Jewish nations living in the Land of Israel. There were so many "State funerals" that the spies went unnoticed.

The Jewish spies misinterpreted what had happened. When they returned from their mission, they reported that the climate of the Land of Israel was so harsh that people were constantly dying.

This interpretation of the events that the spies had seen was very logical. Yet, Hashem was angered by it. The ***Midrash Rabba*** (16:24) quotes Hashem's feeling. "With that which I did for their benefit, they angered me." Hashem said that I caused the multiple funerals to occur to <u>save</u> the spies. The spies took those very same events as a reason NOT to enter the Land of Israel.

The question is, what did the spies do wrong? They interpreted the facts as they had seen them. They did not lie or exaggerate.

The Rosh HaYeshiva zt"l answered, had the spies had the proper degree of faith and trust in Hashem, they would have had a different interpretation of the events that they had seen. They would have thought to themselves:

Hashem had promised them the Land of Israel as a very special place. If it was so special, how could the climate be so harsh? It must be that the climate wasn't harsh. Rather, Hashem, in His loving kindness, was performing a miracle to save them.

The ***Maharzu*** on the *Midrash* indicates that the evaluation of the spies showed a lack of faith in Hashem. He says that Hashem

expected the Jews to act like their forefathers who had total **faith** in whatever Hashem did.

We see from this that the degree of one's faith and trust in Hashem can make a difference in how he views and interprets different events that occur in his life. As said before, all of us are like young children in the hands of our father, Hashem. When we believe that, we will always feel safe, no matter what is happening around us.

Based on a dvar Torah by Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt"l, Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim

Jewish Education Program Queens - In G-d We Trust!

וַיִּבְכּוּ הָעָם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא *"All the People cried that night" (14:1)*

Sam was very excited. He was going to Great Adventures amusement park for the very first time.



He was also going to the Safari, where you can drive your car through a jungle, where the animals roam free, without cages. The Safari was very exciting as all sorts of animals literally came right up to Sam's car. Suddenly, three lions ran up to the car and gave the loudest roars Sam had ever heard. He was petrified and almost lost control of his car. When he realized that the lions couldn't hurt him while he was safely in his car, his heartbeat slowed, and he felt calm.

Sam had a similar response when he visited the Land of the Giants. It was a terrifying experience as he felt like an ant compared to the giants. When Sam's family heard about his experiences, they totally understood his fear.

In this week's parsha, The Jewish People also felt fear. The spies that were sent to scout-out the Land of Israel returned with a terrifying report. They said that the people were very tall. In addition, there also were giants roaming the land. The spies heard the giants describe them as ants- that's how tiny they were compared to the giants. The fruit of the land was also unusual.

At one point, the spies entered a cave. Imagine their fear when they realized that the "cave" was really a discarded pomegranate shell. The enormity of the fruit was also disconcerting to the spies. In addition to all that, the spies saw that death was rampant – they witnessed many funerals, as a result.

When the spies reported their findings, all the Jews cried in fear. They were terrified what would happen to them and their children if they would attempt to enter Eretz Yisroel.

Seemingly, the Jews were justified in feeling fear. The Jewish People's response seemed totally normal – they cried due to their terror.

Yet, the **Midrash says** that Hashem viewed their crying as "for nothing". "Tonight, they cried for nothing. I will cause them to cry for generations."

That night, the 9th of Av was designated as a night of sadness (Many sad things have occurred on that night in history, including the destruction of the Temple).

Why didn't Hashem justify their fear? Why were they punished for it?

To understand this, we must remember what the Jewish People had just experienced first- hand. They saw how Hashem changed nature

in bringing the 10 plagues upon the Egyptians. Hashem took them out of Egypt and split the Red Sea for them, as the walls of water divided and rose miles, up towards the sky. There were 100 different miracles at the sea, including the sea splitting into 12 different see-through tunnels, walking on marble instead of mud and getting fresh water or fresh fruit from the walls of sea water. When in the desert, 3 million people and their numerous animals got water from the miraculous well and received miraculous food daily- the mun.

The Jews should have had the highest level of *bitachon*, trust in Hashem. They should have felt that there was nothing Hashem couldn't do. They shouldn't have felt any fear at all. Feeling fear showed a lack of faith in Hashem, on some level.

We say in our Havdalah after Shabbos, "Hashem is my salvation, I shall trust and not fear…. Hashem was a salvation for me". When we have trust in Hashem and when we look back at His past "track-record" of how he saved us in the past, then there is no need to feel fear, at all.

When we find ourselves in difficult life-situations, we must remember:

1) Hashem loves us <u>more</u> than a parent loves a child.
2) Hashem is All-Powerful and can do <u>anything</u> for us.
3) Hashem has a <u>track record</u> of helping us in the past.

Ben Ish Chai (Ben Yehoyada / Derashos)

"Consistency in service is more powerful than bursts of enthusiasm. A small act done daily with intention draws blessing and clarity into a person's life. Through steadiness, the heart is trained to remain connected even without excitement."

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

14:24 וְעַבְדִּי כָלֵב עֵקֶב הָיְתָה רוּחַ אַחֶרֶת עִמּוֹ

Rashi explains that Moshe Rabbeinu davened to Hashem to save Yehoshua from the sin of the Meraglim. **R' Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l** points out that the two meraglim who did not sin were Yehoshua and Kalev. Yehoshua had the protection of Moshe's tefilla, but what about Kalev? How was he able to overcome this overwhelming nisayon that all the other meraglim were not able to withstand?

Explains Rav Yaakov, the enormous strength that Kalev used to pass this test was Miriam his wife! And because Miriam was the wife of Kalev, Moshe did not feel that it was necessary for him to daven on his behalf. Having a special wife is enough protection and Kalev did not need any extra prayers or shemira!

Chazal tell us (Yevamos 62b) that a man who lives without a wife lives without joy, goodness, blessing, and **חומה**. Choma means protection. When a kallah walks around her chosson 7 times under the chupah, she is creating a chomah. She is fortifying him against all the nisyonos and temptations of the world. The number 7 represents nature, and the choma that a woman creates for her husband under the chupah is within the realm of nature. However, in order to reach the next level of **למעלה מן הטבע** a woman needs to make an extra effort in her marriage to be that special blessing and shmira for her husband.



We are living in a crazy world where the nisyonos and temptations are so great. It takes superhuman strength for a man to be able to overcome the pull of gashmiyus, on many different levels and remain

completely connected to what is right. It is truly the job of the woman to give her husband the ability to remain focused on ruchniyus. A woman can bring her husband down to the lowest point, or she can raise her husband and her entire family up to a life of Torah and avodas Hashem.

It is incumbent upon all men to give their wives the appreciation and admiration that they need, in order for the wife to be equipped with the emotional support she needs to be the special blessing, goodness and protection that all husbands cannot live without.

Torah Tavlin וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בִּן־נוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

The great Gaon, **R' Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz zt"l**, was Rosh Yeshivah of the Ponevezh Yeshiva L'tzeirim (Yeshiva for younger men) and was a ranking member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Degel HaTorah. R' Michel Yehuda merited teaching Torah to generations of students over the course of more than 60 years. Thousands of yeshiva bochurim were educated by him, and sometimes even three generations of talmidim studied under him.



He once said, "I have often seen students who, in the beginning, were not considered particularly gifted, and yet in the end they succeeded magnificently. Why is this so? "Because it was precisely these students - the ones who did not succeed at first - whose parents prayed for them, beseeching Hashem with tears, reciting Tehillim, and giving tzedakah for them, all of which resulted in raising them from the lowest levels to become great in Torah."

R' Michel would always caution parents, students and educators alike. "Never underestimate what you can do for your children and students. Sometimes we 'forget' to pray for gifted children who show so much promise, which is why their success does not always last."

Chazal tell us that Moshe Rabbeinu davened on behalf of his talmid and changed his name from Hoshea bin Nun to Yehoshua. It is hard to fathom that Yehoshua bin Nun was not a great man on his own and we could never suspect that he might have fallen into the trap of the Meraglim. Nevertheless, our Sages emphatically teach us that if not for the efforts of Moshe Rabbeinu on his behalf, Yehoshua would likely not have come out of this incident untainted.

No amount of promise and scholarship can be secure unless efforts are made to preserve them. We must all daven for our children - gifted or not gifted - that they succeed in Torah and Yiras Shamayim.



דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת עַל־כַּנְפֵי בִגְדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם

It is well-known the words of the **Satmar Rebbe zt"l** who was once asked for a beracha and he replied, "Find a person who has numbers on his arm who is still frum - from such a tzaddik you should ask for a bracha!"

There are many such Tzaddikim who survived the Holocaust and the concentration camps, including R' Avraham Yitzchok Sicherman zt"l, who served as the manhig ruchani (spiritual leader) in the Romanian town of Sesht (near Sighet) and was taken away to Munkatabor by the accursed Nazis. His miraculous tale of survival both during and after the war are truly inspiring.

Immediately after the American liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in 1945, many emaciated inmates who managed

to survive years of torment at the hands of the German beasts now died due to the kindness of the liberating soldiers.

These troops were shocked, horrified and reduced to tears at the gruesome sights that met them, but also tragically oblivious to the effects of real food on the digestive systems of the poor emaciated human skeletons. They threw cans of meat and other heavy foodstuffs to the walking skeletons from their army provisions. The inmates fell upon them and being as famished as they were, devoured the heavy foods.

Alas, their internal systems could not handle the overconsumption of fats after years of food deprivation and they fell violently ill. Sadly many did not survive this ordeal at the exact moment of freedom. Luckily, R' Avrum Yitzchok understood the gravity of the situation. He grabbed a bag of sugar thrown at him from the army trucks and went right back to his barracks. He took out one sugar cube and slowly let it melt on his parched tongue. Magically, like a modern-day IV drip, within minutes, as the sugar entered his bloodstream, he felt new life surging and coursing through his emaciated body. He ate a few more cubes and felt his strength returning.

Instantly, his thoughts turned toward the **Klausenburger Rebbe, R' Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam zt"l**, who was interned with him in the Feldafing DP Camp. Shoving the bag of sugar into his pockets, he quickly offered the Rebbe to partake. The Rebbe gratefully ate a few pieces of the sugar and he too was revived. Nearly on the verge of death from starvation, the Rebbe's eyes were dimmed and by ingesting the sugar cubes, he felt fresh vitality and life coursing through him. Looking at R' Avrum Yitzchok, he smiled and exclaimed "Meor es Aynayim - You have lit up my eyes!" At that moment, words were superflous.

A short time later, as others were scrambling to start living like humans again, R' Avrum Yitzchok had some other concerns to attend

to. With cunning ingenuity, he somehow managed to procure a small bundle of shorn lambswool. Taking a long stick, he installed a bent nail at the tip of the stick. Twisting the wool between his thumb and forefinger and winding it through that nail hook by pulling and twisting the strands of yarn, R' Avrum Yitzchok was able to fashion a pair of woolen strings.



His sister Rochel cut a hole in the middle of rectangles of white cotton material and finished the edges. R' Avrum Yitzchok then strung and wound the woolen strings onto the four corners of the garment fashioning the first pair of Tzitzis created totally "Lishma" in a Displaced Persons Camp.

Once again, he hurried over to the Klausenburger Rebbe and presented him with this most precious gift, a brand new priceless Talis Katan with handmade Arba Kanfos. The Rebbe looked at him with awe and gratitude and accepted the gift. He put it on and made the beracha.

After donning his first pair of Tzitzis with years of only the striped prisoner uniform adorning his frail body, it was a moment of unprecedented kedusha and simcha. R' Avrum Yitzchok made a second pair for himself and felt the sweet bliss of fulfilling a mitzvah that was out of reach for such a long time. (Incidentally, his sister Rochel who survived the war in a different camp, met someone who told her that she looked just like the "Tzitzis-maker" in Feldafing, which led to her reunion with her brother!)

Fast forward fifty years. Though not a youngster anymore, R' Avrum Yitzchok insisted on running down to his basement storage, where he still kept his antique Tzitzis stick and proudly demonstrated to his granddaughter the simple and crude mechanism by which he produced Tzitzis for his fellow liberated inmates in Feldafing and Fehrenwald (Fernvals).

May Hashem gather us together M'Arba Kanfos Ha'aretz. *(Leilu Nishmas R' Avraham Yitzchok ben Yosef Moshe zt"l.)*

וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בִּן־נוּן וְכָלֵב בֶּן־יְפֻנֶּה מִן־הַתָּרִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ קָרְעוּ בִּגְדֵיהֶם 14:6

When the ten spies gave their negative report, the Jews believed their cynical words and "forgot" how Hashem did miracles and wonders in Egypt to bring that mighty nation to its knees. Yehoshua and Kalev, however, countered the words of the other spies and protested that the land was exceedingly good and if Hashem was on their side, they could take it. But before they made their case, they did something unusual - they tore their garments in mourning.



The Ohr HaChayim explains that since they had seen the land with their own eyes, they were more acutely disturbed by the reaction of the people to the negative report their companions had brought back. They were shocked at how this wonderful land was disdained by their brethren.

What is interesting is why they tore their clothing in the middle of the argument, and not after they realized that all was lost. Why tear

them when they were still trying to tell people the truth - to convince them about the Promised Land?

Some explain that it was shock value. Such a violent reaction would cause people to pause and come to their senses. But perhaps, the tearing was not to drive home their point, but rather to lay bare that they were simply two men revealing what they saw. They had no ulterior motives, no hidden agendas, and no reason to push their point.

Just as Moshe's speech impediment went away when he spoke words of Torah, for their own truth shone forth, Yehoshua and Kalev did not need to be dressed imposingly to prove the value of their words. On the contrary, by showing that they were not trying to impress the people, the truth could stand out on its own.

There is always a hint of doubt to truth. Hashem does that to give people free will to choose. However, when something seems so perfect, so iron-clad that it cannot be argued with, it is most often a falsehood. This was the challenge of the spies. They made a case that was very convincing, and they backed it up with proof. The only problem was – it was a lie



וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם…***that you may look upon it, and remember…*** (15:39)

Making a sign to remind oneself to do something is always helpful and appropriate. A person shouldn't rely on memory alone, regardless of whether the obligation is physical or spiritual. (Ma'ora Shel Torah)

R' Meir Simcha Hakohen zt"l of Dvinsk (Meshech Chochma)



וַיִּרְגְּמוּ אֹתוֹ בָּאֲבָנִים וַיָּמָת - The **מְקֹשֵׁשׁ עֵצִים** (wood-chopper on Shabbos) was stoned **בָּאֲבָנִים** with many stones. Previously, by the **מְגַדֵּף** (blasphemer) Vayikra 24:23, it says **וַיִּרְגְּמוּ אֹתוֹ אֶבֶן** - they killed him with a stone. Why was one killed with many stones and the other killed with a single stone?

The wood-chopper was killed in the middle of the desert where there was no cemetery where **חייבי מיתת בית דין** could be buried, so he was stoned and buried with those stones in that spot. The **מְגַדֵּף** was stoned and then hung, so he was killed with a single stone to make it easier to hang his uncrushed body, and afterwards to bury him in a cemetery."

Saying of The Week With Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"Follow in the ways of the Avos (forefathers) so that their merits will be your protection."

When Hashem wanted to punish the Jews for the sin of the spies, Moshe davened for their forgiveness.

The Ramban points out that Moshe did not mention the merit of the Avos even when it came to other sins he did. The reason is that here Hashem was trying to give them Eretz Yisroel as an inheritance from the Avos, but the Jews did not want the Holy Land. As such, he could not use their merits to "bail them out". Let us follow in the ways of our great leaders so they can be a merit for us.

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת עַל־כַּנְפֵי בִגְדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם



Someone once asked **R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg zt"l** why he had such extraordinary self-sacrifice for the mitzvah of tzitzis. He answered very simply, "Chacham lev yikach mitzvos" - The wise of heart will seize good deeds. (Mishlei 10:8) He would often cite the Gemara, **" חֲטוֹף וְאֶכוֹל חֲטוֹף וְאִישְׁתֵּי, דְּעָלְמָא דְּאָזְלִינַן מִינֵּיהּ כְּהִלּוּלָא דָּמֵי**. " *Grab and eat, grab and drink, for the World which we are leaving is like a wedding* - Eruvin 54a). He wanted to "chap" as many mitzvos as he could.

When he was asked how he could wear so many pairs when they were so heavy, he would respond, "Would you have such a question if you would be carrying gold?" To him, his layers of tzitzis were layers of pure gold. When a young boy asked him about his tzitzis, he told him two things. First, he recounted the well-known lament of the **Vilna Gaon zt"l**, who, on his deathbed, cried that he was leaving a world where it is so easy to gain merit and reward for performing a mitzvah as simple as tzitzis.

Seeing that the boy was not yet satisfied, he told him another story. **R' Moshe Ashkenazi zt"l**, a disciple of the Gaon, was unable to find employment in his hometown, and was forced to become a rebbi in a village quite a distance from his family. He stayed away from home for most of the year, as he could not afford frequent trips to visit his family. For the Yamim Tovim, however, he would scrape together enough money to come home and bring with him the funds he had earned to share with his poor family. Although he was scrupulous in his observance of all the mitzvos, there was one mitzvah about which R' Moshe was especially careful: the mitzvah of tzitzis.

As far back as he could remember, R' Moshe had never walked four amos (cubits) without wearing his tzitzis. He was constantly looking at them, holding them, making sure they were clean and unripped. The reverence he felt for the mitzvah of tzitzis was imparted to his young, impressionable students.

Prior to one Yom Tov, R' Moshe boarded a wagon for the journey to his hometown. But midway through the trip, R' Moshe's tzitzis got caught inside one of the spokes of the wheels and tore in half. Immediately, R' Moshe asked the driver to stop the wagon so that he could check his tzitzis. Upon examination, he realized that they were not useable. Although they could be fixed, there was nothing he could do about the situation so far from any city.

Because he did not want to travel four amos without tzitzis, R' Moshe offered to pay the driver to return to the village, retrieve another pair of tzitzis, and bring them back to R' Moshe, but the driver refused. Finally, after much negotiation, R' Moshe agreed to give the driver all the money he had made over the last few months.

It was an incredible sum to pay for tzitzis, but R' Moshe felt he had no choice. He sent the driver off and waited by the side of the road. But the driver never came back. R' Moshe had given away all his money and had received nothing in return. But while he was disappointed that the driver had tricked him, he was elated that he had sacrificed so much for this mitzvah that was so dear to him. He waited by the side of the road until another wagon came along a few hours later, and the driver kindly agreed to go to the next town and obtain a pair of tzitzis for R' Moshe.

A few months later, R' Moshe was in middle of teaching his young students when a messenger burst into the room. The messenger informed R' Moshe that his brother, R' Yitzchok, the Rav and author of sefer Bris Olam, had suffered a stroke; R' Moshe was needed at his brother's side during his last moments. R' Moshe ran immediately to his brother's bedside and asked that everyone leave the room.

The crowd exited, but after they closed the door, a few people looked to see what was happening. R' Moshe stood over his brother's still body and whispered words of Tehillim. Suddenly, he removed his tzitzis and spread them over his brother's body.

"Master of the World," he said, "not only have I dedicated my life to performing Your commandments, but I have sacrificed all my money for the sake of tzitzis. Now I am prepared to give up my reward if You will restore my brother's health." He then donned his tzitzis and walked out of the room. His brother lived for another five years. *(Adapted from Rav Scheinberg, by Rabbi Yechiel Spero)*

Sefas Emes in the name of the Chiddushei HaRim

כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל־אֶרֶץ מוֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם׃ -



Chazal tell us that right after the fatalistic story of the Meraglim and the decree that the entire generation will die in the desert, Hashem gives the mitzvah of **נסכים** which are poured together with the Korbanos, in order to soothe the people's fears that indeed their children will inherit the land and offer sacrifices when they arrive. In other words, to offset their sorrow about the decree of death, He gave them the mitzvah of pouring wine.

This is a remez to the words in Mishlei (31-6): **תְּנוּ־שֵׁכָר לְאוֹבֵד וְיַיִן לְמָרֵי נָפֶשׁ** - 'Give drink to the one who is perishing and wine to those of bitter soul.'

The way to cheer up a 'bitter soul' is by drinking a L'chaim!"

14:20 וַיֹּאמֶר ה' סָלַחְתִּי כִּדְבָרֶךָ



The Yid HaKadosh of Pshischa zt"l once related the following episode from his childhood. "When I was a little boy being taught the Alef Beis by my melamed (teacher), I learned a lesson to last a lifetime. He told me that when two people sit together over a glass of vodka, and each of them is willing to play down his ego for the sake of his friend, and neither one considers himself higher or loftier than the other, than the Almighty forgives them of both of their sins.

"One day I asked my melamed, 'What is a single dot?' He told me that it was the letter Yud. Curious, I asked again, 'And what about two dots?' To which he responded, 'Two dots, or two yuds, spell out the holy Name of Hashem.'"

"Some days later, I saw something that looked like two yuds, but they were not next to each other. It is called a semi-colon. I asked him whether this too spelled out the Name of Hashem. He answered, 'There is an easy way to tell. If you find the two yuds equal, on the same level, neither trying to raise itself up over its comrade, then you have Hashem's Name. But if you have the same two dots on top of each other, that is definitely no holy name.'"

"From there, I gathered that two Jews who meet over a glass, neither of them considering himself superior to the other, together constitute the Name of Hashem. How? Because the word כוס (glass) is comprised of the initial letters of the words, **וַיֹּאמֶר ... סָלַחְתִּי כִּדְבָרֶךָ** - *'And He said ... I have forgiven according to your word.'*

However, the Name of Hashem is missing in this contraction. The way to insert His Name is when two Jews meet over their **כוס**, their 'glass' of vodka, and neither acts loftier than his friend; that is how they make up the Name of Hashem. And now we have the posuk in full: **וַיֹּאמֶר ה' סָלַחְתִּי כִּדְבָרֶךָ** - 'And Hashem said: *I have forgiven according to your word.*'

"You see, then, how it is that when two Jews meet the way they should, the Almighty forgives them of all their sins!"

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

15:20 רֵאשִׁית עֲרִסֹתֵיכֶם חַלָּה תָּרִימוּ תְּרוּמָה כִּתְרוּמַת גֹּרֶן כֵּן תָּרִימוּ אֹתָהּ



There are two reasons why some men discourage their wives from baking challah every week: 1. They don't want to "overwork" them too hard. 2. They don't want to put any bakeries out of business! (A third possibility we won't discuss is that she does not know how to bake!) However, what these men do not realize is that the mitzvah of separating a piece of dough, raising it up and making a beracha, is one of the three special mitzvos that were specifically given to women. If so, why would any man want to deprive his wife of fulfilling this mitzvah - which was specifically given to her?

Okay, but let's dig deeper. What does **הפרשת חלה** (separating challah) have to do with women? The answer is ... A LOT! One may say that it defines the very essence of a Jewish woman! The mitzvah of challah is the idea that one can take a substance as physical and

mundane as dough, lift up a piece, make a beracha, and it is transformed into something holy! A woman, who is the "mainstay" of the home (for those revisionists, that doesn't mean she must "mainly stay" at home!), is in charge of all the everyday tasks that keep a house running efficiently. She CREATES the home! She IS the home!

A woman, is reminded with her mitzvah of challah that she has the power to take everything physical and uplift it in a spiritual sense. The main ingredients in challah are flour and water. The flour comes from the ground and water comes from the sky. When one kneads them together, it is an act of bridging heaven and earth, combining ruchnius and gashmius, physical and spiritual, and creating something beautiful!

This is the message of challah that speaks volumes to women: the great ability to infuse kedushah into every physical and mundane act, thereby achieving great heights in true Avodas Hashem.



When R' Sholom Ber Schneersohn zt"l (Rebbe Rashab), was a child of four years old, his mother, Rebbetzin Rivkah, ordered a new garment for herself from a tailor. The tailor, thinking that no one would miss the leftover fabric, conveniently stuffed it in his pocket, inadvertently, leaving a piece sticking out. Innocently, the child went over to the tailor and pulled out the piece of fabric. The tailor became embarrassed and apologized profusely. After he left, Rebbetzin Rivkah rebuked her son for embarrassing the tailor. The child began to cry bitterly for he didn't realize the consequence of his act. After he quietened down, the

boy approached his father, **R' Shmuel Schneersohn zt"l (Rebbe Maharash)**, to ask for a course of repentance for the sin of having embarrassed another person. His father asked him why he needed to know and who had he embarrassed? The boy answered that he simply wanted to know and refused to divulge any more. When his mother heard how her young child refused to discuss it with his venerated father, she asked her son why he didn't tell his father, the Rebbe, the whole story. The child answered, "Isn't it enough that I embarrassed someone; should I now add to it the sin of lashon hara, as well?"

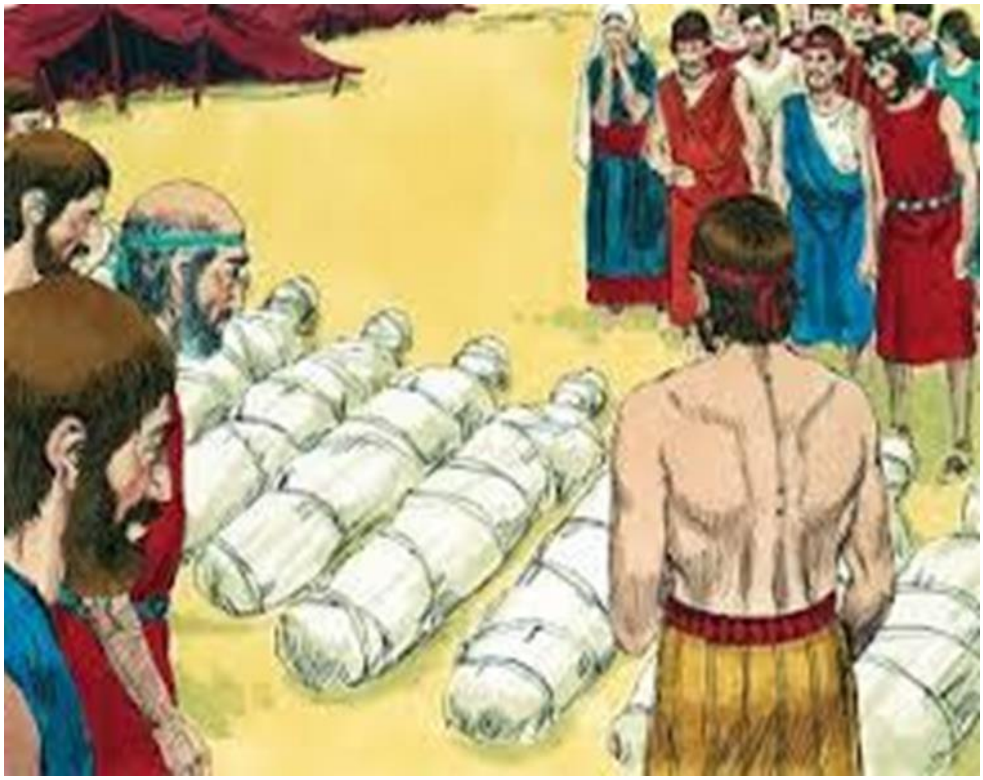
Concepts in Avodas Halev From The Family of R' Chaim Yosef Kofman Zt"L

בְּמִסְפַּר הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר־תַּרְתֶּם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה תִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־עֲוֹנֹתֵיכֶם

After the sin of the Meraglim, Hashem swore that only Yehoshua bin Nun and Calev ben Yefune, together with the children of the spies themselves, will merit to see the Promised Land. When every other member of Klal Yisroel between the ages of 20–60 will die in the desert as a punishment for the 40 days of Lashon Hara that was spoken against Eretz Yisroel, only they will remain alive in the Land.

Let us consider. The Torah describes this punishment as **יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה** - a day for every year. Shouldn't it state: **שנה ליום שנה ליום** - a year for each of the forty days that they sinned? Weren't they punished forty years for the forty days? The words **יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה** seem to be backwards.

My machshava here is based on the Medrash Eicha that is quoted in Tosfos and the Rashbam. Rav Levi says that on the day preceding Tisha b'Av, a Bas Kol was heard throughout the camp saying, "Go forth and dig!" Everyone would go out and dig graves and sleep in them on the night of Tisha b'Av.



In the morning, a Bas Kol would announce: "Arise, and separate the dead from the living!" They would discover approximately 15,000 missing (deceased) of the initial 600,000. This scenario continually recurred, year after year, for 40 years, until the entire generation was decimated. Thus, the punishment for the sin of the Meraglim took place for only forty days each year - but those 40 days took 40 years to complete!

This is the meaning of יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה - one day a year for the forty days they spoke Lashon Hara.

וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת עַל־כַּנְפֵי בִגְדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתְנוּ עַל־צִיצִת 15:38

Phil Harris was born in Clarks Summit, PA in 1915 and spent the rest of his life as a community leader in Scranton, until he died in Miami at the age of 91. In 1948, he was involved in a train accident that cost him both his legs.

He was transported to the emergency ward of a New Jersey hospital in critical condition. Phil had lost a great deal of blood and was passing in and out of consciousness. The night nurse took one look and whispered to the surgeon on call not to bother because the patient would not survive. In agreement, the surgeon left the room, but returned a few minutes later, operated on him and saved his life.

After he recovered, Phil returned to the hospital to ask the doctor what had made him come back. The doctor told him that upon exiting the emergency room he noticed Phil's clothes piled upon a chair.



There was a certain bloodstained garment (tzitzis) that he remembered seeing his grandfather wear and this compelled him to come back and operate. For the rest of his life, Phil would tell teachers that when they teach the mitzvah of Tzitzis, they should repeat his story as living proof of the efficacy of Tzitzis protecting those who wear them.

The Medrash relates of a drowning man who cries out to the captain of a passing boat. The captain tosses him a rope, which the man grasps and uses to hoist himself aboard and save his life. The strings of the Tzitzis represent the idea that mitzvos are the vehicle that will protect us and raise the physical world to a higher level of spirituality. While Torah is here to guide us, we still hold loose strings. Hashem granted us the "rope" of Tzitzis to grasp and pull ourselves closer to Him. Tzitzis is a protection, for our bodies and souls and also serves as the link forming a deep connection to Hashem.

"It is important to know that Shabbos is not just another day of the week. On the contrary - all our success in this world on any day of the week depends on our closeness to Hashem, and this depends on Shabbos." ~ R' Shimshon Dovid Pincus Zt'l.

One of the most well-received and beloved tourist attractions in all of Israel is the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo. In fact, the Biblical Zoo was the most popular tourist attraction in Israel from 2005 to 2007, and logged close to three-quarters-of-a million visitors in 2009. The original zoo was a tiny establishment in the center of Jerusalem, on Rechov Shmuel Hanavi; however, following the 1948 War of Independence, the zoo was relocated to a 15-acre plot in what was then the outlying neighborhood of Romema, where it remained for the next forty years.

During this time, the quaint and not-overly developed zoo, became a local institution that was widely frequented by both religious and non-religious visitors, if not for intellectual edification, then as a form of identification with the city and the numerous animals mentioned in the Torah.



For much of the forty years at its location in Romema, the zoo also had the distinction of being situated not far from the Tchebin Yeshivah in Jerusalem. Day after day, the Rosh Yeshivah, **R' Avraham Genichovsky ZT"L**, would walk past the Biblical Zoo on his way to preparing and delivering his daily Gemara shiur at the yeshivah.

One day, as he was hurrying along deep in thought, he heard the cries of a child emanating from the entranceway of the zoo. He stopped and noticed a young boy crying incessantly. R' Avraham walked over to the boy and said in Hebrew, "Why are you crying?" Between sobs, the little boy told him that he was lost and he could not find his parents. Well, R' Avraham couldn't very well just let the child remain

there weeping, so he took him by the hand and led him inside the gates of the zoo. At that moment, the Rosh Yeshivah looked about and realized that the zoo was a big place and there were quite a lot of visitors in the park. As it was a warm day and many of the guests - including the young boy at his side - were not religious Jews, he surmised that the level of Tznius in the park would not be what it should, and this gave him pause. What was he to do and how was he to find the boy's parents without being forced to look at things that he knew were forbidden to view?

Finally, he came up with a plan of action. "Mottek (sweet child), let's help you find your parents," said R' Avraham. Without another word, he hoisted the little boy onto his big, broad shoulders and told the boy to be a "scout" on the lookout for his father and his mother. The boy giggled gleefully, enjoying the unexpected ride on the shoulders of this man who was not only a "giant" in height, but more importantly, in Torah and Derech Eretz. Then, off they went; a small obviously delighted chiloni boy, perched safely and securely on the shoulders of one of the preeminent Roshei Yeshivah in all of Israel. As the boy gazed about searching for his parents, R' Avraham, hat in hand and long beard trailing to his side, turned his head downward and focused his eyes on the paved walkways that circled all about the expansive gardens of the Biblical Zoo. The crush of visitors made it hard to walk but R' Avraham never looked up once: he just kept his eyes peeled to the ground and walked from one path to another.



What a sight it must have looked like to the other guests! Finally, he heard the words he was expecting. "There he is! There he is!"

shouted a relieved and excited woman, and before she could even get close, R' Avraham swung the little boy off his shoulders and down to the ground. Then, without even waiting for a word of thanks, he turned and walked quickly out the front gates of the zoo.

R' Avraham would later say that this was perhaps the only time he ever gave a shiur in yeshivah without any preparation. "But what else should I have done?" he asked. "Leave a crying child all by himself? I could never do that!"

R' Aryeh Tzvi Frummer ZT"L, Kozhiglover Rav (Eretz Tzvi) would say:



"According to the Mishna in Bikkurim (3-1), the procedure for the mitzvah of Bikkurim is that a person goes out to his field and finds a fig, grape or pomegranate which has ripened. He then ties a ribbon around the fruit and is makdish (sanctifies) it as Bikkurim.

Why just these three fruits and not any of the other seven minim? By Mikra Bikkurim it says, **וענית ואמרת** - one shall proclaim loudly that he is not ungrateful (**כפוי טוב**) and shows his appreciation to Hashem for His kindness. Now, since these three fruits - fig, grape and pomegranate - were the same three fruits the Meraglim brought back with them from Eretz Yisroel and used them scornfully to mock and besmirch the Land, thus we use these same three fruits in a positive and appreciative way to show that we are thankful to Hashem for His land."

R' Moshe Avigdor Amiel ZT"L (Derashot El-Ami)



"And they went and came" - just as the return was with evil designs, so too, the going was with evil designs.' (Rashi)

In life there is no standing still, there is no middle ground; there is either ascension or descension. Life is constantly in a state of flux, and if one does not go up, most assuredly he will go down. The spies were princes who began as righteous men, but they travelled with no intention to ascend and allowed themselves to descend."



R' Yechezkel of Kuzhmir zt"l (Nechmad M'zahav)

הַבְּמַחֲנִים אִם בְּמִבְצָרִים - Moshe gave the spies a clear sign of the strength of the Land's inhabitants. If they live in unfortified cities and towns, it is a sign that they are strong, not afraid of being attacked by enemies. If they live in fortified cities, it is a sign of their weakness, as they have the need for protective walls against their enemies.

If one feels he is very strong spiritually, and has the power to fight the evil inclination, he may live in an 'unfortified' area. If he is weak spiritually, he must live in a fortified city. i.e. fortified with a strong education system, with a proper Rav."

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo



The immediate reaction to jealousy - many times - is to speak Lashon Hara. Since I wish to have what you have, I feel inadequate, and the only way for me to raise up my own self-esteem is to put you down. The way to combat this destructive middah is to get to the root of the problem.

Let me explain: A man once came to a doctor and complained that his entire body is causing him excruciating pain. The doctor told him to touch his foot - the man did and screamed out in pain. The doctor then said to touch his arm. The man cried out in agony. The doctor then asked him to touch his nose; the man fell to the floor in unbearable pain. The doctor smiled and said, "Don't worry. I have figured out the problem and I know the solution. Your entire body is perfectly healthy. It is your finger that is broken!"

We too, must understand the underlying cause of all the pain and anguish that our jealousy and the words and actions that emanate from this jealousy is causing. The root of the problem is that we are not focusing on the fact that Hashem is orchestrating everything in the world and that He has given us exactly what we need. Each person must recognize: Hashem has given ME so much goodness and there are so many wonderful things for which I have to be thankful. We must always remember that we are each here for the specific purpose which Hashem has sent us, and He has given us every single thing that we need. What others have will surely not help us achieve our goals - but will actually hinder us. Rather than focus on your pain, get to the root of your jealousy, and with Hashem's help you will overcome it.

To hide one's personal possessions in the Auschwitz death camp was nearly impossible. As soon as an inmate was brought into the camp, he was stripped of everything he owned, and for those who were sent off to the barracks of the slave labour camps, they were given a flimsy prison uniform, a pair of wooden clogs, a piece of bread - and nothing else!



The Talis of the holy **Sigheter Rebbe, the Yetev Lev!** This was the prized possession of **R' Tzvi Hirsch Meisels ZT"L**, an einekel (grandson) of the Rebbe, and later to be known as the Veitzner Rov. When the Nazis forcibly removed him and his family from their home, his first thought was to take this Talis and keep it with him at all times. This would be his shemirah - his protective amulet - that would allow him to make it through the hardships of the second world war. Alas, it was not to be. The moment he entered the confines of Auschwitz, he was stripped of his family, his clothing, his very identity. His prized Talis was taken as well, which added insult to injury and caused him an untold amount of extra grief.

It was not until later, when R' Tzvi Hirsch was taken to the slave labour division, that he learned the location of the barracks where the Nazis kept all the stolen artifacts, and after a great deal of searching, he found his grandfather's Talis. R' Tzvi Hirsch was ecstatic. The first thing he did was remove the silver atara. Then he shortened the long Talis down to the size of a Talis Katan, which he slipped under his prison uniform. His heart soared with hope and he truly believed that he, together with his son Zalman Leib, would survive the war, in the protective merit of the holy Talis.

On more than one occasion, he was accosted by various S.S. guards and kapos, and he was even beaten once on account of his Talis Katan. But he held on to it literally for dear life, and when he was asked by German and Jew alike, why it meant so much to him, he replied, "I am wearing 'Guts klaid'" (the Clothing of G-d).

Miraculously, he kept this exceptional garment on his body throughout the war and no German kapo forced him to remove it. It was not until ten days before the end of the war, that R' Tzvi Hirsch's luck ran out. There was one kapo, an especially malevolent villain named Willie, who took pleasure in torturing those under him. As the war was drawing to a close and the Allied bombs could already be heard inside the camp, the Nazis herded all their prisoners onto cattle cars in the hope of transporting them away from the advancing troops. But before they did, every kapo was in charge of inspecting his prisoners to see if he was worth transporting. During this hurried inspection, Willie detected a bulge under the prison garb of R' Tzvi Hirsch and he pulled the material out from under his shirt. When he realized that this prisoner had been wearing a Jewish religious article right under his nose, his rage boiled over. Shouting like the madman that he was, he tore the Talis into shreds with his own hands and then tossed the ragged material into a nearby burning fire.

R' Tzvi Hirsch stood in his place, unbelieving what had just transpired and inconsolable over the loss of his precious keepsake. If not for his son Zalman Leib pulling him by the arm onto the train, R' Tzvi Hirsch would not have been able to move. His distress knew no bounds and he was so totally heartbroken that he believed he didn't have the strength to go on.

That night, as the prisoners huddled in the narrow cattle car, sleep was hard to come by. Tens of emaciated inmates were forced to stand or sit in place leaning against one another, while the evil Willie prepared himself a cosy makeshift bed in the middle of the car, and

lay himself down to sleep. R' Tzvi Hirsch had been resting his head on the shoulder of his son, while Zalman Leib had been standing in place. R' Tzvi Hirsch was nudged awake when Zalman Leib whispered loudly, "Please, Tatte, take your head off of me. I simply can't hold it up any longer!" Zalman Leib bent forward and his father - somewhat annoyed - was forced to pull his head back and off the shoulder of his son, creating a bit of space between father and son.

Suddenly, the droning of allied aircraft could be heard, and the strafing began. At that very moment, a burst of gunfire broke through the walls of the car and shot directly in the space where father and son had been huddling seconds earlier. With a loud thud, two bullets pierced the two hands of the evil kapo Willie, the same two hands that had torn the precious Talis Katan to shreds earlier that day.



וַיִּהְיוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ מְקֹשֵׁשׁ עֵצִים בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת 15:32



As a soldier forcibly drafted into the Russian Army, **R' Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky ZT"L, the great Steipler Gaon**, was once ordered to fire his weapon on Shabbos. He refused to do it and for his insubordination, he was ordered to "run the tunnel" - a sadistic form of punishment where soldiers stood in a row facing each other, creating a tunnel about two feet wide between them. The victim was required to pass between the two lines, while suffering a frenetic torrent of blows, kicks, rifle butts, and curses. Most often, the victim did not reach the end of the

tunnel alive. With Hashem's help, the Steipler survived, although he was beaten to a pulp, sustaining 80% loss to his hearing for the rest of his life from the repeated blows to his ears.

Many years later, the Steipler recalled that event and said, "The day I 'ran the tunnel' in the Russian Army, I imagined that with each blow, I was offering my life for the sanctity of Shabbos. Nothing is sweeter than mesiras nefesh, dedicating one's whole life to the fulfilment of Hashem's mitzvos."

The Medrash tells us that the **מקשש עצים** - the man who intentionally gathered wood on Shabbos, did so with good intentions. He had seen that Bnei Yisroel were becoming lax in their observance of Shabbos and he felt that it was important for them to get a taste of what the punishment for violating the Shabbos would be. Although he believed his act of mesiras nefesh was done for the good of the people, his righteous intent was misplaced, and he was subsequently punished with death. As the expression goes: "Two wrongs don't make a right!"

Torah Gems

וְעַתָּה יִגְדַּל־נָא כֹּחַ ה׳ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ לֵאמֹר... ה׳ אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד 14:18

The gemara Sanhedrin 111a relates how Moshe begged for mercy on behalf of the Jewish People. Earlier, when Moshe had gone up to the Heavens to receive the Torah, he found the Almighty writing the words, **ה׳ אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם** - *"Hashem, slow to anger."*

This, he was told, applies to the righteous and to the wicked and it will come in handy at a later time. That later time was when Moshe prayed for mercy after the sin of the Golden Calf and the Spies. Now, he realized that only through the mercy and slowness to anger of Hashem, could the Nation survive the decrees issued against them.

What is interesting to note, is that unlike by the sin of the Calf, when Moshe added the word **אמת** to his Tefillah **ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת**, by the sin of the spies, he consciously deleted this word entirely.



R' Yosef Sholom Elyashiv quotes the Zohar to explain that Hashem looks to forgive Bnei Yisroel only with those middos that the people themselves maintain. However, when the spies spoke lies and words of deceit against the Holy Land, and by extension, Hashem Himself, there was no way that Hashem could employ the attribute of Emes - truth, to find forgiveness for the people, and thus, the word **אמת** was deliberately left out of Moshe's prayers.

On a lighter note, it is told that in Vienna, there was once a rabbi who was far from G-d-fearing and honest, and even his congregants knew it. One time on Shabbos, the chazan neglected to follow the normal custom to wait until the rabbi finished Krias Shema before continuing the prayers. The rabbi was incensed and demanded to know why the chazan didn't wait for him to finish with the word **אמת**. The Chazan shrugged. "If we had to wait until you reached **אמת** (truth), it could take a very long time.....!"

"Every trait has a time and a measure. Wisdom lies not in extremity, but in balance — knowing when to act and when to restrain." ~ Orchos Tzaddikim.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo



Once upon a time there was a leaf on an old maple tree that was extremely unhappy. "If only I could fly and be free, rather than be stuck forever to this tree," it thought. "I would explore new places, see interesting sights, experience life. Hashem, if only I could fly." So Hashem brought a strong gust of wind, which detached the leaf from the maple tree. Up, up it flew, higher and higher, faster and faster. The little leaf was overcome with joy at its good fortune. At last it could fly. Then, as the wind died down, the little leaf dropped to the ground, and without its source of sustenance, it shrivelled up and died.

The quest for total pleasure is a never-ending battle, and the results, are short lived. The only truly wealthy person is one who is satisfied. One who has inner peace and enjoys what he has. One who is so involved in material pursuits that it overtakes his life, is nothing but a pitiful pauper.

The Chofetz Chaim ZT"L says that there is no greater poverty than this. One's lot in life constitutes the tools Hashem has given him for the role he is expected to play. Some need financial wealth, possibly to function as distributors of Hashem's funds; others need poverty to achieve the personal growth that is born out of adversity. Only Hashem knows who needs which tools. Although one may view another's possessions or talents as better or more valuable than his own, he must remember that he personally would likely have no use for them. Wanting to obtain what belongs to another, or desiring to

be what another person is, can be compared to the leaf on the maple tree who thought he could fly. All you're doing is setting yourself up for a fall! Don't worry ….. just be happy!



Yerushalayim has a mysterious charm, draped over it like a delicate veil of simplicity and modesty. To find it, one must reflect upon it and diligently look for it. Only then will one discover the beauty and grace of the character of its people. Take for example, an old-time resident of the holy city, **R' Mordechai Kaminetzky ZT"L**. At two o'clock in the morning, in the dead of night, you would find him trudging through the narrow alleys of Shaarei Tzedek, lantern in hand, on his way to the big shul where he spends the night studying Torah and reciting Tehillim until it is time for davening.

The story is told that one night, R' Mordechai was busy attending to an important need and went to sleep very late. Half an hour later, though, something disturbed him and roused him from his slumber. Immediately, he jumped out of bed and sat down to learn. He spent the rest of the night steeped in Torah and Tefillah and did not go back to sleep. Later, someone asked him, "Why didn't you continue sleeping at least until two o'clock in the morning, the time you usually get up? You barely slept at all last night and a few more hours of needed sleep would do you good."

R' Mordechai looked at the questioner and smiled. With a twinkle in his eye, he replied, "Let me tell you about when I was a young boy in Europe," he began. "As a child, I contracted a malignant disease which, it was thought, would definitely cut my life short. Right then and there, I made the decision that at my first opportunity, I would move to Eretz Yisroel, to die here and be buried in its holy earth.

At a young age, I managed to arrive on these shores and every day since, I wait for the death that those doctors promised, to take me.

But for some reason, it just hasn't come. Meanwhile, I got married, raised a family, and Boruch Hashem, I'm in my eighties now, still alive and well. Of course, each night when I go to sleep, I do not know if I will wake up alive. "Now, it says in the Torah that the דור המדבר, the Jews who came out of Egypt, were all collectively punished for the sin of the Meraglim when they spoke against Eretz Yisroel. They all knew that they would die during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness and Chazal even tell us that every night they would lay down to sleep in a self-dug grave. Some of them died and remained in their graves; others emerged hale and hearty from their graves in the morning.



Just imagine," R' Mordechai continued, "A person who went to sleep in his grave was disturbed and suddenly woke up in the middle of the night. Do you think he could just turn to the other side and go back to sleep? Of course not! Such a person would jump out of his grave, happy to still be alive!"

R' Mordechai's eyes shone brightly as he concluded. "That's exactly how I feel. To me, my bed is my grave. If I have the zechus to wake up alive, Boruch Hashem, I jump out of my bed to serve the Ribbono Shel Olam, Who has saved me from the clutches of death."

"Greeting Shabbos is a glorious moment, in which every Jew receives a kiss from Hashem. At this time, an indescribable love is aroused. Shabbos is the main mitzvah in which we develop a personal relationship with Hashem." ~ R Shimshon Pincus Zt"l.

R' Yechezkel of Kuzmir ZT"L would say:



"If dishes are packed well and tight, one next to the other, the box can be moved about and none of the dishes will break. If they are packed loosely, even the slightest sudden movement is liable to break them.

So too with Bnei Yisroel. If they live in friendship and peace, they cannot be harmed. If there are arguments, each demanding his own space, they cannot withstand even the smallest turbulence."

וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם֙ אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת ה׳ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם 15:39

A secular Jew in Israel from a Chassidic background once related the following story. His son, a commander of a Tank Artillery division in the Israeli army had become vehemently anti-religious. He even went so far as to complain about a photograph of his grandfather which hung on the wall in his father's house. The photograph, of an old man in traditional Chassidic garb with peyos and a long beard, was particularly offensive to the young soldier. "That man is a barbarian. Take the picture down," he would shriek. He stopped coming altogether to visit his father and threatened to continue to do so until the picture was removed.

Everything changed during the Six Day War, in June of 1967. The Israeli tanks in the Sinai Desert found themselves all spread out. If they were attacked, they would be unable to ward off the enemy alone and would have no choice but to regroup and fight together.

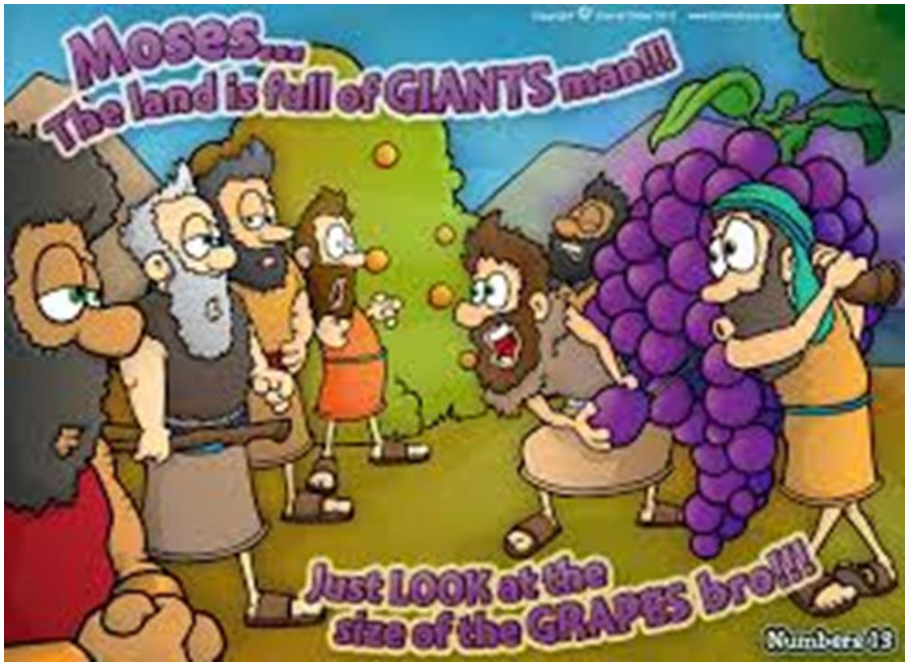


Suddenly, Egyptian tanks approached. The Tank Commander quickly turned his tank around and began to race back to the platoon. Unfortunately, the fastest way was straight across an open stretch. Suddenly, he saw an old man davening, wrapped in tallis and tefillin, right in his path! "Doesn't the fool have any place better to pray than in the middle of the desert?" he screamed. "I can't take these religious Jews anymore. I'm going to run him over!" And he was determined to do so. But how could one Jew wilfully harm another? At the last possible minute he swerved sharply to avoid the old man. The Egyptian tank in hot pursuit behind him didn't have any such tinge of sympathy. As the tank ran over the spot where the old Jew was standing, it suddenly exploded into a fiery inferno as it tripped a hidden landmine underneath. The tank commander breathed a sigh of relief.

After the war, the soldier decided to visit his father, and when he walked into the house after so long a time, the photo of his grandfather was still on the wall. Although he had seen it before, as he looked at the picture, the face appeared familiar in a strange way. He suddenly recognized the face of the old Jew who was praying in the desert. It was his own grandfather who had come to save him during his time of need! It was then that the young soldier embraced religion. "I realized right then that he was praying for me that I should live," explained the newly religious soldier, "And I wanted to be like him."

13:32 הָאָ֗רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר עָבַ֤רְנוּ בָהּ֙ לָתֻ֣ר אֹתָ֔הּ אֶ֥רֶץ אֹכֶ֖לֶת יוֹשְׁבֶ֑יהָ הִ֗וא

The Medrash tells us that Hashem struck the Canaanim with a plague coinciding with the visit of the spies, in order that the spies could traverse the land unhindered. By being preoccupied with their dead and dying, Hashem miraculously arranged that the spies go unnoticed by the huge giants that occupied the land. Seeing the Canaanim burying and bitterly mourning their many dead, however, the spies concluded that Canaan was a murderous land.



The spies could have arrived at that conclusion, says the **Steipler Gaon, R' Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski ZT"L**, only because they wanted to; Chazal say that a person is led down the path which he has chosen for himself. The spies were determined, for whatever reason, to come back with a bad report, and they therefore took the very thing which Hashem did out of kindness to them and turned it against Him. Simple logic should have shown them that their conclusion was wrong: If Canaan was a murderous land, its inhabitants would have been accustomed to it and would have lost some of their sensitivity to death. They would not have been mourning or displaying any signs of despondency. When a person has prejudged an event, however, logic will not sway him.

A Wise Man would say: "Our greatest glory isn't in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

Did The Spies' Mission Benefit Moshe Rabeinu? by Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher

שְׁלַח לְךָ אֲנָשִׁים וְיָתֻרוּ אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן "G-D spoke to Moshe, 'Send men for yourself (LECHA), to spy out the land...'" (Bamidbar 13:2).

At the beginning of Parshat Lech Lecha (B'reshit 12), Rashi comments that the word LECHA (for yourself) means "for your personal benefit". When G-D told Avraham to go to the Holy Land, it was for Avraham Avinu's benefit, because his life would improve in Pisgat Ze'ev.

Rabbenu Bechayei says that we can apply this interpretation to the same word in our verse. But how was the mission of the Spies to Moshe's benefit? After all, the result of the Spies' disastrous mission was that the Jewish People had to remain in the desert for an extra 39 years, instead of entering the Holy Land immediately.



At the end of Parshat Sh'mot (6:1), Rashi says that G-D had already decreed that Moshe could not enter the Holy Land, as punishment for his complaint, "Why did you do evil to this people?" Thus, as soon as the Jewish People were ready and able to enter the Land, Moshe would have to die. Had it not been for the negative report of the Spies, Israel would have been in the Holy Land 39 years sooner. So Moshe would have died then, at the age of 81. It was obviously to Moshe's benefit to remain alive for another 39 years. As the Mishna in Avot states, "One hour of Teshuva and good deeds in this world is more precious than the entire World to Come".

The Jewish People also had a tremendous benefit, because we had the pleasure and privilege of seeing the Shechina on Moshe's face for an additional 39 years. The lesson of the Spies is that every cloud has a silver lining. Thus, the Hebrew word **נגע**, which means Plague, are the same letters for the Hebrew word **ענג**, which means pleasure.

Rabbi Yehuda Appel – Aish HaTorah



In the years prior to World War Two, it was known that two Chassidic sects – the Belzer and the Munkatch Chassidim – did not get along very well. In the town of Munkatch lived a Belzer chassid named Moshe Silber. Fiercely loyal to his Rebbe, he would often argue with the Munkatcher Rebbe. One day, in the midst of such an argument, the Munkatcher Rebbe turned to Moshe Silber and said, "You will die with your *tallit katan* on!"

Some years later, the war came, and Moshe Silber was deported to Auschwitz. The threat of death was constant: He suffered hunger, illness and sheer brutality. Of course, in Auschwitz there was no way of obtaining, let alone wearing, a *tallit katan*. So Moshe Silber never doubted that he would survive Auschwitz. Why? Because, after all, the Munkatcher Rebbe had said he would die with his *tallit katan* on. If the Munkatcher Rebbe – a great *tzaddik* – had said so, it was doubtless to be that way.

Ultimately, Moshe Silber did survive the war. And for years after, he would sit wearing his *tallit katan* in his house in New Jersey, telling visitors wonderful stories about his former opponent, the

Munkatcher Rebbe – whose words had given him the strength and hope to survive a living hell.

Time and time again, we see how focusing on the future can get people through times of deep crisis and tragedy. Such an instance is alluded to in this week's Torah portion, Shlach.

Moshe, at the behest of the Israelites, sends a group of spies to scout the land of Israel. Ten of the 12 spies bring back a negative report, warning the Israelites of great danger if they enter the land. The Canaanites, they explain, are very strong and the Israelites will be no match for them.

Though the remaining two spies, Caleb and Joshua, argue against this scenario, the people do not believe them, and a wave of despair engulfs the Israelite camp. Many speak openly of flouting G-d's will and returning to Egypt. Angered by this treachery, G-d informs them that, indeed, they will not enter the land of Israel. Instead, they will wander 40 years in the desert, and it is only their children who will inherit the land.

An interesting Midrash points out that this was really not all for the bad. Because it was clear that the Israelites were not ready to enter Israel. In truth, they needed time in the desert to grow spiritually, and to gain a greater confidence and trust in G-d.

Nevertheless, with the news of their banishment to the desert, an even greater despair became rampant in the Israelite camp. What guarantee did they have that any Israelites would ever enter the land?!

In an effort to calm the people and assure them that everything would work out, G-d tells Moshe to teach the Jewish People the mitzvah of "Challah." (This is the separation of a portion of dough, which is then given as a gift to the Kohanim.) The key here is that "Challah" is a Mitzvah which initially could only be observed when the Jewish People entered the land of Israel!

It was a great comfort for the people to learn that the Almighty was making plans for the nations' future entry into the land. Though their present circumstances were trying, they were confident they had a future to look forward to.

Hidden in the Sand - Torah Tidbits

Bamidbar 14:37 tells us of the demise of the Ten Meraglim: **וַיָּמֻתוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים מֹוצִאֵי דִבַּת־הָאָרֶץ רָעָה בַּמַּגֵּפָה לִפְנֵי ה׳** *"And the men who spread the evil report about the Land died in a plague before HaShem".*

That's what happened to the Ten. 600,000 others were fated to die out during the 40 year sojourn in the Midbar. We often forget that when we speak of that generation dying out, we are referring to the adult males. The women of that generation were not involved in the devastation of the Sin of the Spies. The women, it seems, had a very different attitude about the prospect of crossing the Jordan and living in Eretz Yisrael.



The five sisters who epitomize the exact opposite of the Meraglim are the daughters of Tz'lofchad. **וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֹתָיו מַחְלָה נֹעָה וְחָגְלָה וּמִלְכָּה וְתִרְצָה**. This partial pasuk from Bamidbar 27:1 has the same Gimatriya as the above pasuk.

There is a sort of balance between the nay-sayers and those who enthusiastically displayed their love for Eretz Yisrael even without yet having gone there. On which side of the balance are you? This is our ongoing challenge throughout the generations.

Tzitzis

The Torah says וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת ה' ***"You will see it and you will remember all of Hashem's mitzvos…"*** (15:39).



The Tur writes, "It is proper that everyone should be careful with the mitzvah of tzitzis; to own a garment with tzitzis and to wear it all day, because the main purpose of the mitzvah is to remind us to do the mizvos, and we need this reminder all the time…" How do tzitzis remind us to keep the mitzvos?

The Tur writes, "When someone tells his friend to do something, he ties something onto his belt to remind him…" Similarly, the tzitzis remind people to keep the mitzvos.

The Alshich HaKadosh compares it to someone who ties a string around his finger, to remind him of what he needs to do. In very rational ways, the tzitzis helps people remember the mitzvos. But then the Alshich asks, so why is that people wear tzitzis, but it doesn't help them to remember? He explains that the tzitzis isn't a segulah for memory, it is a reminder.

When one puts the tzitzis on in the morning, he should think, I am putting on tzitzis to remember the mitzvos. Every time he looks at the tzitzis, he should think, this is reminding me to do Hashem's will. By doing so, it will remind him to keep the mitzvos. But if he will put on the tzitzis without a thought, it will not have any affect at all.

The Beis Yisrael (of Gur) zy"a added that this is the reason the tzitzis hang on all four corners of the garment. Whichever direction one looks, he has a reminder of who he is, and of what is expected of him.

He tells a mashal: Someone once tied a string around his finger without thinking why he was doing so. After some time, he recalled that there was something important that he needed to remember, but he forgot what it was. "Why isn't the string helping me remember?" he asks. "I tied a string on my finger, but it isn't helping."

People laughed at him and explained, "The string around your finger will only help you when you know why you tied it. But if you never knew why you tied the string on your finger, how can it help you? It isn't a segulah for memory, it is a reminder."

The Watch



Someone asked the **Brisker Rav (the Gri'z zt"l)** a riddle: "I have two watches. One of them is broken, and it doesn't move at all. The other one moves, but it is always slow and off. Which watch is better?" "What do you think?" the Brisker Rav asked him. The man said, "I think that the watch that never works is better, because it tells the correct at least time twice a day. The other watch is always telling the wrong time."

The Brisker Rav replied, "I think that the watch that moves slowly is a better watch. It is at least moving. A watch that doesn't move isn't a watch at all." (The scholars of Brisk would occasionally ask riddles like this, to sharpen their minds for Torah study.)

The lesson that is important for us now is that a person should be moving places, in avodas Hashem. Even if he is slow and only taking small steps, he can be considered an oved Hashem. However, if he doesn't move at all, he isn't an oved Hashem at all.

Parshah Thoughts Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

When the spies returned from scouting Eretz Yisrael and reported about their findings, they told the nation that the land is ***"a land which consumes its inhabitants"*** (13:32) אֶרֶץ אֹכֶלֶת יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ הִוא.

The Gemara (Sotah 35a) states that everywhere the spies went, they saw funerals. **Rabbi Eli Mansour** quoted **the Steipler Gaon (Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky)**, in Sefer Birchas Peretz, who observed that people see what they want to see. Two people can witness the exact same event, or look upon the exact same sight, and see two entirely different things.

We learn from this that our vision can be affected by our mindset and attitude.

Shabbos Treasures The Precious Gift of Shabbos



There is a Minhag on Shabbos Night to sing Shalom Aleichem three times. **The Ya'avetz** explains that Shalom Aleichem was written based on the Gemara (Shabbos 119b) which says that each person has two Malachim that escort him home from Shul each Shabbos night— one is a good Malach and the other is bad. When they enter the home, they check for three things: 1) that the candles are lit, 2) the Shabbos table is set, and 3) the beds are nicely made up. If the three things are found as they should be, the good Malach Bentches the home that it should be this way the following week as well, and the bad Malach is forced to answer Amein

to this Brachah. If the three things are not found, the bad Malach curses the home, saying that it should be unready for Shabbos the following week as well, and the good Malach is forced to answer Amein.

Shalom Aleichem is repeated three times and it is symbolic of the three things listed in the Gemara that each Jewish home should have prepared in honour of Shabbos Kodesh!

A Few Seconds Worth – Rabbi Yossi Goldberg

וַיַּהַס כָּלֵב אֶת־הָעָם 13:30 . Kolev quietened the people. Rashi tells us how Kolev managed to quieten everyone to speak in the defense of Moshe, as they panicked over Eretz Yisroel. He shouting out loud, "Is this all Ben Amram has done to us?"



By using a derogatory name for Moshe, he implied that he was about to say something really terrible about Moshe. This made everyone go quiet because they wanted to hear what he had to say. But he disappointed them all by continuing with – "Come on, we're going to go up to Eretz Yisroel and inherit the land, just like Hashem wants." Kolev is praised greatly by the Torah for his attempt to quieten Klal Yisroel in this way.

Harav Moshe Feinstein asks – what was the big deal? All Kolev had managed to do was to distract Klal Yisroel for a few seconds before they realised that he was on the "other" side and they then probably just ignored the rest of his speech. For those few seconds he was praised??

He answers with a powerful lesson. We don't realize the value of making a Kiddush Hashem. Even if we achieve only a few seconds of Kiddush Hashem, it is priceless and therefore Kolev is praised for the few seconds of Kiddush Hashem that he achieved when he quietened them.

The following story is told about **Rav Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg**. When he was newly married, he lived in the town of Mir in Europe. Soon after his Chasuna he traveled to Branovitch to receive Semicha from the Godol, **Rav Elchonon Wasserman**.

After taking the test on the Shulchan Aruch, Rav Elchonon was happy with Rav Chaim Pinchos's knowledge. But he then explained to the aspiring Youngerman that he always asked those who did Semicha by him to wait a few days in his town so he could observe the general behaviour and davening of the person. Only once Rav Elchonon saw the wholesome person, would he then agree to give Semcha to him. "This is difficult for me as I am newly married,"

Rav Scheinberg explained. "Would it be possible for me to return home now to my wife who is waiting for me and I'll arrange at a later date to come back for a few days so you can observe me." Rav Elchonon replied, "Wait here a few more hours and I'll give you an answer." A few hours later, Rav Elchononn called Rav Chaim Pinchos to come to him and he handed him his Semicha certificate. He wished him well and sent him on his way back to his wife.

Talmidim of Rav Elchonon were amazed with this break from the normal procedure. "How come you gave him his Semicha already?" they asked Rav Elchonon, "Why did you not ask him to wait a few days like you usually do?" "Imagine the scene," Rav Elchonon began, "of when this newly married man is going to arrive home and his newly married wife would be waiting excitedly for him." "Knowing that she was supposed to have married a budding Talmid Chochom, she would expect him to walk in and show her his fresh Semicha certificate. But he would walk inside empty handed.

Assuming that he had failed his Semicha test, she would be devastated. 'I though he was a Talmid Chochom,' she would think. 'Why did he not succeed to get Semicha.'" "After these few short moments, Rav Chaim Pinchos could easily explain to her that he did pass the test yet the Semicha certificate is just simply delayed until a later date. When hearing so, she would be calmed." "But for those few seconds, she will have thought badly of her husband and there would have been a disgrace to the honour of a Talmid Chochom and a Chillul Hashem."

"To avoid causing a few seconds of Chillul Hashem," Rav Elchonon ended, "I made some basic enquiries to check that he was genuine and then granted him his Semicha straight away." How so valuable and important are a few seconds of Kiddush Hashem!



Tzitzis and Teeth – Rabbi Yosef Ritchman

After shuir, one of the talmidim approached his Rebbe looking for help. He said "I have a terrible toothache do you know any segulos to help relieve the pain." The Rebbe opened up a Kaf Hachaim and showed the talmid some fascinating words.

"One segulah of tzitzis is to help avoid toothaches. There are 32 strings on a garment of tzitzis which correspond to the amount of teeth one has. And, when one makes the bracha "l'hisateif b'tzitzis", he should have in mind that the first letter of each of those two words is numerically equivalent to 32, corresponding to the 32 teeth. This should help with toothaches".

Grape Vines in the Desert?



R' Chaim Kanievsky notes an interesting connection between the story of the spies and the parsha of nisachim that follows. He asks what happened to that large cluster of grapes that the spies took from Eretz Yisroel during their mission?

Throughout the next forty years in the desert, the Bnei Yisroel needed to bring korbanos and do all of the other services in the Mishkan. One of those services is the nisuch ha'yayin. To have wine, you need grapes, so where were the Jews going to find grapes in the desert.

These grapes actually made up the supply of wine needed for all forty years. And this is what the pasuk in Shir Hashirim (1:14) states אֶשְׁכֹּל הַכֹּפֶר דּוֹדִי לִי ***"The cluster atones for my beloved to me."***

The cluster of grapes which they used for korbanos was an atonement for the sin they had done with that cluster.

Chayei Adam

"One should never underestimate the power of daily habits. Through small, repeated acts of care and discipline, a person slowly shapes his character and secures his path in avodas Hashem."

Female Spies

The Kli Yakar quotes a Midrash that asks why the pasuk at the beginning of this week's parsha specifically says שְׁלַח לְךָ אֲנָשִׁים ***"send for yourself men"***

Those men actually hated Eretz Yisroel, as they said "Let us appoint men and we will go back to Mitzrayim". However, the women loved Eretz Yisroel as they said *"give us a portion in the land."* When Hashem gave permission to send the spies he said if you want to send men, go right ahead, but if you ask me I would say you should send the woman because they won't speak badly about the Land.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings



A story is told about a Yid who came with his family to Eretz Yisrael, many years ago. When he arrived, he kissed the ground, because of his love for the land. A peddler selling pomegranates came by. The family was very excited to eat from the fruit of Eretz Yisrael, and they bought a pomegranate. The father

opened it with a pocketknife and saw that it was filled with pits. From all the fruits that they knew in chutz le'aretz, the pits are thrown away, so he threw way the pomegranate pits, and divided the shell among the family. They bit into the bitter shell, and then they had to struggle to hold back from speaking lashon hara on the fruits of Eretz Yisrael. Later, they learned that one eats the pits of a pomegranate.

A lesson we can derive from this story is that people generally focus on the shell, the externals, the great accomplishments, the matters

that can easily be seen. But let's remember that the matters concealed inside also counts. The heart; the emotion; the desire to serve Hashem are all part of what makes a deed special.

Living Jewish - Full Sheitel For Full Health



In the earlier years of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's nesi'us, the Rebbe held a strong campaign for women to cover their hair with a sheitel, which would properly cover the hair.

Covering the hair with a sheitel was set by the Rebbe as a condition to have him be Mesader Kiddushin at one's chuppah. Mrs. Zelda Nemes told: I was born in Russia, moved to Eretz Yisroel, where I married, and then travelled to America. At that point, I was wearing a hat and a half sheitel to cover my hair. At the end of my first Yechidus, the Rebbe asked my husband to leave the room, and then told me that one should wear a sheitel. I stipulated that my hair is completely covered, as I wear a half sheitel in the back and a hat which completely covers my hair in the front.

The Rebbe said that wearing a half sheitel is like having half one's health. These words deeply concerned me, and the Rebbe smiled broadly and said, "If one wears a sheitel, one is promised gezunt, parnosssah and nachas from the children and grandchildren." Then with a broad smile, the Rebbe asked me what else I would like, and I said that this is enough. He then called in my husband and told him to buy me the nicest sheitel so that others would also want to wear one. *(reprinted from Lma'an Yishme'u)*

Stories Of Our Gedolim - The Unusual Prize

The Rebbe was slightly disturbed. He had devised a rewards system as an incentive for his boys to learn better. Each boy who excelled in his studies would receive a sefer as his prize. One boy had requested cash instead of a sefer. The rebbe agreed but was very surprised as the request had come from one of his best talmidim. Of what use was cash to this little boy? Why wasn't he content with the sefer as the other boys were? But he decided to keep quiet and begrudgingly agreed.

The young boy worked hard and approached his rebbe for his well earned prize. The rebbe handed the boy the money who accepted it happily, much to his rebbes chagrin. Unable to contain his curiosity the rebbe followed the boy as he proceeded to take the money and enter a store. He emerged tearfully holding a small device and was surprised to see his rebbe standing there, demanding an explanation.

"What did you feel was more important than a sefer that you asked for money instead?" The boy had tried to keep his purchase a secret but now realized that he was unable to do so. He pulled out his purchase and explained: "My mother has been having a hard time hearing but couldn't afford to buy hearing aids. I asked for money so that I can use it along with the rest of the money I've saved to buy them for her."

The rebbe was shocked and touched by his young students selflessness and compassion. He had unjustly suspected the little tzaddik. This little tzaddik later grew up to be the great **Rov Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l**, famed for his vast Torah knowledge and compassion as he had displayed for his mother so many years before.

"The whole world is a very narrow bridge, and the main thing is not to be afraid." ~ Rav Nachman of Breslov.

Why Did Moshe Not Daven For Kalev? Written By Benjamin A Rose

Before the Meraglim left on their mission to Eretz Yisroel, Moshe changed Yehoshua's name and davened for him to be saved from the Meraglim. Kalev on the other hand did not receive any special Bracha. He made his way to Chevron to be Mispalel on his own behalf. Why didn't Moshe daven for Kalev as well?

Rav Elyashiv answers that Yehoshua was Moshe's talmid and there was no doubt that he would stay in his tzidkus no matter the circumstances. All the Meraglim knew this. Moshe was afraid that if things turned sour like they in fact did, Yehoshua's life would be in jeopardy because the Meraglim may want to kill him since Yehoshua would outwardly take a stand against his peers. For this Moshe davened that Yehoshua would remain safe and unharmed.

Kalev on the other hand took a covert approach. He would appear to agree with the Meraglim until he arrived safely back to the Midbar. Because of this he was not concerned with his physical safety. He was more concerned that by outwardly going along with the Meraglim it may influence his "Pnimiyus", his inner soul and he would end up just like them.

For this says Rav Elyashiv, a tzadik's tefilos are not sufficient. Since this is purely a matter of "Bechira"; individual choice, a person must daven on his own behalf. Therefore, Kalev went to Chevron to daven for himself.

R' Nochum of Horodna ZT"L would say: "If I had already died and the Almighty told me I could come back to life again, imagine how happy I would be. Now that I am still alive, shouldn't I still feel that same joy?"

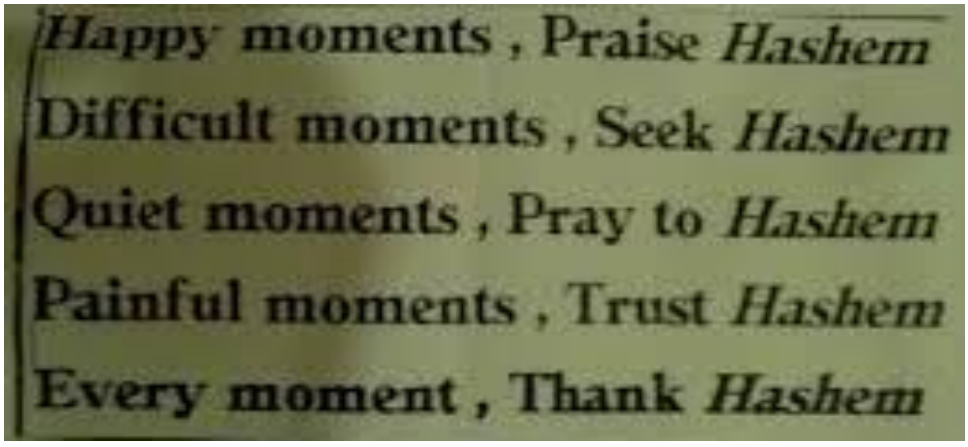
Whats The Connection Between Being Mechalel Shabbos And Tzitzis Written By Benjamin A Rose

At the end of the Parsha we find the M'Koshesh Eitzim being Mechalel Shabbos and then immediately following this is the Parsha of Tzitzis. **The Vilna Gaon** offers an explanation for the connection. On our Tzitzis we make five knots. In the four gaps between these knots we wrap one of the strings around the others. The number of times we wrap the other strings in these four gaps are 7,8,11,13 for a total of 39.

Similarly on Shabbos there are 39 Avos Melachos, which are categorized into four groups. The process of baking bread consists of 13 Melachos, making clothing 11, preparing parchment and writing 8, and the remaining Melachos 7.

Look For Positive In Life – Open Your Eyes Written By Marc Zemmel

The spies came back with the report that it was "A land that devours its inhabitants".



We know that Hashem purposely made that these funerals happen so the people would be distracted in order to give the spies a safe mission. When they saw the funerals they assumed it must be a place where people die all the time as everyone was at the funerals.

Logically though, if it was "A land that devours its inhabitants" (poeple are always dying) then there wouldn't be a large number of

people for each funeral as society wouldn't function-rather only close friends and family would go.

The Meraglim here saw what they wanted to see. They already had a negative outlook on the land so interpreted the episode in this fashion.

The Gemorrah in Gittin relates the story of Rabbi Ilish who was imprisoned at one time. While sittintg in his cell, a bird flew in and what semmed to the Rav to say "Ilish, Escape" However, not conviced, he asked his cell mate if he heard what the bird said. The cell mate replied "Ilish, Escape" After the confirmation, Rabbi Ilish did infact escape.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that Rav Ilish did understand the conversation of Birds as the "Seder Olam" says but still asked his cellmate as that was what Rav Ilish wanted to hear so needed an objective opinion. A person sees what he wants to see and hears what he wants to hear based on his outlook and opinion of something.

We could all learn to take a positive outlook in life and always judge things in the positive way as well as always being objective to all cases even at the worst of times when things are looking glum.

Paperweight Measures Written By D Fine

One of the claims the spies made upon returning back to base was that the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael were 'anshei middos' (13:32), which is normally translated as 'of giant proportions,' I.e. they were giants.

However, **Rav Eliyahu Lopian** is said to have explained this spies claim in the following way. The spies claimed that the inhabitants of the Land were refined, charming people – that they were people of good middos (character traits). The spies thought that the residents of Eretz Yisrael were such good people that HaShem would not remove them from their Land in favour of the Bnei Yisrael.

But the spies were gravely mistaken. Even if these inhabitants looked like they had good middos, they were paper-thin.

As has been the case with many 'developed societies' in the modern age, when push comes to shove these refined characters are shown to be fake and just being on the surface of the person, as opposed to being part of their character. Just because someone puts on a fake smile and says 'please', does not necessarily mean that they are charming on the inside at all.

The Torah Any Times Newsletter

Rabbi Yisroel Brog - Hashem's Baby



I had just finished exercising when I received a phone call from a father of one of my students. The exact local time was 8:05 pm. Among the things we discussed, he asked if I could give him some assistance. "My wife has now been in the hospital for twenty-four hours," he said. "We are expecting a child, but it has been taking quite a while. Do you have anything you can tell me?"

"Of course," I said. "Step one," I went on to say, "don't believe that doctors are G-d. Secondly, the Gemara tells us that there are three partners in the creation of a child: the father, mother and Hashem. Hashem graciously calls parents 'partners,' although it is really Hashem who grants a person life. Hashem is the boss.

"When people daven," I told him, "they do so as if the child is theirs, without recognizing that it is Hashem's baby. Therefore, ask Hashem to have His baby be born! That is the best prescribed way to formulate your prayers. G-d willing, you will be a father by 10 o'clock!" "That fast?" incredulously said the father. "Absolutely," I reaffirmed. I then wished him well and hung up the phone.

I then went on to return a call to someone who had phoned me earlier in the day. Not coincidentally, this man was a co-worker of the father who I had just finished talking to. After speaking for a few minutes, the man said, "By the way, do you know that my business partner, Yitzchak, is in the hospital now? Do you have anything you could say to him?" I smiled to myself. "I just spoke to him!" I said.

As this was occurring, I received another call interrupting my current call. I looked down at noticed that it was no less than the awaiting father, Yitzchak, from the hospital I had spoken to minutes ago. The current time was 8:17. "I got to go," I said, "Yitzchak is calling me back…" I figured that Yitzchak wanted me to repeat what I had just told him, as he may not have heard and understood correctly.

"Mazel Tov! It's a boy!" "Wow!" I said I was surprised how fast he called me back, only 12 minutes later. But that was not the record.

Sometime before then, I received an emergency phone call from a man whose wife had been in the hospital for two days waiting to give birth. I gave him the above prescription of how to word his tefillah and then asked him, "Where are you right now?" "I'm in the hospital on the first floor, and wife is upstairs." he said. "Say what you have to say," I told him, "and then go to your wife and be there for the baby to be born."

5 minutes went by, and my phone rang again. "Mazel Tov!" he said. "I couldn't believe how fast it was. I went upstairs, and as soon as I arrived, I saw my wife being wheeled into the delivery room."

People cry to Hashem and ask Him to save their baby. But it is Hashem's baby. And if you understand that it is Hashem's baby, then you'll understand this story.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS SHELACH

The Determined Baalas Teshuvah's Explanation



The Bostoner Rebbe, zl, related the story of a young baalas teshuvah, from America, who had spent Shabbos in Har Nof with the Rebbe, and returned a week later to ask for a brachah. In the course of the conversation, the Rebbe asked her how she had become such a determined baalas teshuvah.

She replied, "It began with my grandfather. He once called me in and said, 'I want you to remember three things: remember that you are Jewish; remember Shabbos; remember me.' "His statement left a powerful impression on me, but, since our home was far from religious, I was rather at a loss.

"I started out by lighting candles Friday night. Every Friday night, I faithfully lit the Shabbos candles… week in and week out. And every Friday night (like clockwork), when my father saw the candles, he proceeded to quickly extinguish them. So, I became observant because of my grandfather… and my father."

She spoke these words with complete seriousness, as if almost matter of fact. At best, this seemed baffling. How did her father assist in her becoming observant? "Your father?" the Rebbe asked.

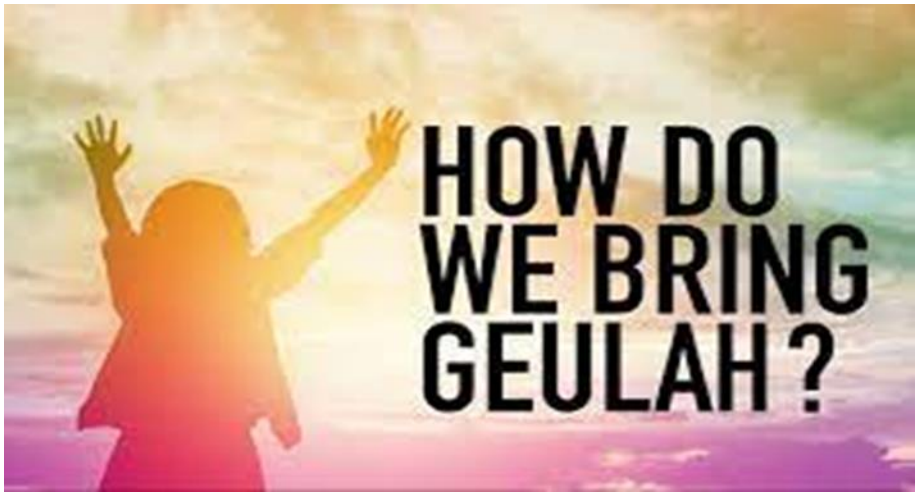
"He is the one who put out your candles every week. Why would you attribute your successful journey to religion also to your father?"

"Yes," she said, "it was my father who made me realise that if he could so obstinately continue in his persistence to extinguish my Shabbos candles, I could just as stubbornly continue to keep them burning. So, I became religious because of both my grandfather and my father."

We are able to learn a great deal from the positive influences which we encounter, and from the negative ones as well. When we withstand the negative, we transform them and strengthen ourselves in the process.

A Tefillah 'Beshem Omrah' Brings the Geulah

ויאמר ה' סלחתי כדבריך (יד כ)



It was Yom Kippur night. With the conclusion of Kol Nidrei, before the passuk "Vayomer Hashem salachti kidvarecha," which is customarily recited, **Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev** stopped and called out to the mispallelim: "Chazal say (Avos 6:6): 'Anyone who says something in the name of the person who said it brings Geulah to the world,' let us therefore say a 'davar beshem omro' and hasten the Geulah.'

Immediately he cried, "Vayomer Hashem, and Hashem said, salachti kidvarecha, I have forgiven, as you have said." (*Zechusa D'Avraham Va'eira*)

Rav Yaakov's First Entrance Exam

After little Yaakov Kamenetsky was born, his family moved to a small town by the name of Dolhinov, where the people of the village had an unquenchable love for Torah.



As a young child, his father would take him on Shabbos night at two in the morning to the Beis HaMedrash which was filled with the sounds of Torah learning, as if it was in the middle of the day.

At the age of eleven, the young Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky left home to learn in the Yeshivah of Minsk, where he passed an entry exam with the Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Shlomo Glovenchitz, zt"l, displaying his brilliance in learning.

The Rosh Yeshivah, however, was still unsure whether he should accept such a young boy into the Yeshivah, and told him: "You are not even Bar Mitzvah yet."

With the innocence of a child, the young Rav Yaakov replied, "Well, I came here to learn, not to be the tenth man of a Minyan."

Rav Yaakov was accepted into the Yeshivah, and made his way to become one of the greatest Torah giants of his generation!

(Torah U'Tefilah as compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg).

"If a Jew wishes to see a miracle today, he need only look at himself. The greatest of all miracles is that even one Jew exists in our day and age." ~ R' Bachya ibn Paqua zt"l

The Torah Learning of The Malachim

Rav Meilich Biderman one related a story. A man once came to his Rebbe for a Brachah, and the Rebbe asked him, "Do you have set times for learning Torah?"

The man replied, "Rebbe, does Hashem really need my Torah learning? Does it make a difference whether I learn Torah or not? Hashem has enough Malachim that are serving Him far better than I can."



The Rebbe responded and asked, "What is your profession?"

The man replied, "I'm an artist."

The Rebbe asked, "What was the nicest painting you ever saw?"

The artist responded, "I once saw a most beautiful painting of the sun setting over the ocean. It sold for five million dollars."

The Rebbe said, "Five million dollars? Why so much? Anyone can take a picture of the sunset and it will appear even more genuine that what this artist painted. What makes his work so expensive?"

The artist replied, "Rebbe, that is true, but taking a picture doesn't require much effort. A painting requires hours of work. That is why it is so much more precious than a photo."

The Rebbe persisted and said, "I could understand if you would tell me that it was sold for ten thousand dollars. Perhaps even for twenty thousand dollars. But five million dollars? That seems exaggerated and unrealistic!"

The artist realized that the Rebbe didn't understand much about art, so he explained a little more. "When a person takes a picture, he is almost certain that it will turn out well. But when an artist begins to draw, he knows that it is very possible that the painting will not turn out well. The slightest wrong stroke of the brush can ruin an entire painting that took weeks or months to create. There is only a small chance that his painting will turn out exactly as he wants it to. This is the reason he deserves to be paid so well."

The Rebbe responded, "Pay close attention to what you have just said, and you will understand the value of your Torah learning. A few moments ago, you were wondering why Hashem needs your service, since the Malachim in Shamayim can serve Hashem so much better than people can. That is all true. However, Malachim do not have the hardships that people have.

"They don't have a Yetzer Hara, they don't have to honor debts at the bank, and they don't deal with other people. We struggle very hard to serve Hashem. We have a Yetzer Hara that fights with us we have obligations, temptations, and so much more.

"Taking all of this into account, a person's service is indeed very valuable to Hashem, far more precious than the service of the Malachim. So yes, be very certain about it— Hashem wants your Torah learning! It is very important to Hashem. It is specifically your learning Torah that finds favor in the eyes of Hashem, and it is more precious than all the services of the Malachim in Shamayim!

(Torah U'Tefilah as compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg).

"A man is not truly compassionate until his joy at his neighbour's good fortune is as great as his compassion at his neighbour's misfortune." ~ Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev.

Even More Valuable Than Gold or Food



Rabbi Yechiel Spero writes a beautiful story about a survivor of World War II. He was speaking to a group of survivors who, like himself, had suffered, and were now prepared to go on. He began his short speech in the following manner: "During the war, I always thought that the most valuable commodity was money, until I came to Siberia and worked eighteen hours a day mining gold. I figured that I could always smuggle a little bit into my pocket, and in a short while I would be rich.

What a fool I was to think that my gold had value in Siberia, where money was worthless. It was food that we needed, and besides, what good was gold if there was nothing to buy!

My focus turned to food. The pangs of hunger overwhelmed me until, one day, a passing guard walked by smoking a cigarette, and I began to crave cigarettes. However, cigarettes became more and more difficult to get. While tobacco was not that elusive, the paper in which it needed to be wrapped was very scarce, even for the guards.

Now, it was no longer gold, food, or cigarettes that were of great value. It was plain paper. One day, an elderly peasant approached me and asked me if I knew how to read. His son was a soldier in the Soviet Union's Army, and he would periodically write a letter to his father.

The father could not read, so he made a deal with me— if I would read him his son's letter, he would give me the paper envelope in return. I was overjoyed! However, as I looked at the envelope, I noticed that there was some lettering on it, which were in Hebrew.

Reading it carefully, I saw that the writing was from Davening! It had been years since I had Davened, but I knew what I was holding. I put the envelope in my pocket and brought it to one of the learned men in our group. When I showed him my discovery, he excitedly agreed that this was a page from a Siddur.

He was thrilled! He said Hashem had not forgotten about us, so how could we forget about Him? We started a Minyan. Three times a day, a Chazan stood up and read from the envelope. Our one-page Siddur gave us tremendous Chizuk and strength through Tefilah. We all felt like we now had hope again, and that our lives had meaning and purpose. We looked forward to Davening together every day.

It suddenly occurred to me that I had now discovered the most valuable thing in the world. It was not gold. It was not food or cigarettes, or even paper. It was Tefilah. The ability to connect with Hashem, to reach out and speak to Him, gave us hope. Without hope, we had nothing, and with hope, we had everything. There was another aspect of this discovery that was mind-boggling. The page of the Siddur contained a message that was made specifically for us. The page began with the words in Az Yashir of, 'Hashem Yimloch L'Olam Va'ed!', 'Hashem will rule forever!', and ended with the words from the Tefilah of Ahavah Rabbah, 'Avinu Av HaRachamim Ha'Meracheim Racheim Aleinu', 'Our Father, our Compassionate Father, Who is merciful, have mercy on us!'

These precious words kept us going and gave us life, and it allowed us to continue until we were able to go free. It was clearly Hashem Who did this for us, as He showed us that he had not forgotten about His children!"

R'Adin Kronenglass ZT"L says: "Friends are those rare people who ask how we are and then wait to actually hear the answer!"



Too Much Wisdom

There are three approaches to explain the *meraglim's* sin:

(1) They didn't have *bitachon* in Hashem, Who can do anything. They made this error because they used their common sense. With cold logic, they explained to the rest of the nation that it is impossible to conquer the land. They forgot Hashem could perform miracles for us, beyond nature and logic.

The second explanation is:

(2) They didn't believe Hashem would do miracles for them after they sinned with the *egel*. Once again, their error was they were using their common sense. They said, "How can it be that after we stooped so low, and betrayed Hashem, that He will still perform miracles for us. They failed to appreciate that Hashem's love for His children transcends the boundaries of humanly perceived logic.

The third explanation:

(3) The *meraglim* thought it was preferable for the Jewish nation to remain in the spiritual setting of the desert. Once again, they lacked *temimus*. They should have realized that their wisdom and understanding of good are minimal, and they should trust Hashem's decision. Hashem wanted to bring them to Eretz Yisrael, so that was undoubtedly the best path for them.

The Baal HaTurim writes that the final letters of שלח לך אנשים spell חכם - wise. The *meraglim* were too wise; they wanted to understand everything. Whatever did not fit into their perception of logic, they didn't believe.

We have to "Think rationally, don't be unrealistic," and that is the *yetzer hara*, because our rational minds cannot understand

everything. We have *temimus*, and we believe what the Torah tells us, even when it doesn't make sense to us.

The Gemara (*Makos* 24:) tells that after the Churban, *chachamim* saw foxes running out of the Kodesh Kadoshim. Some explain that it was specifically foxes because foxes are known to be clever animals. This was a hint to the Yidden that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because they were too clever, and they didn't have the attribute of *temimus*.



At the end of the *parashah*, we are taught the mitzvah of tzitzis. This mitzvah shows us that we don't understand Hashem's ways. The Torah forbids wearing *shatnez* (a garment of wool and linen), yet for performing the mitzvah tzitzis, *shatnez* is permitted.

How can that be? It doesn't make sense to our logical minds. If *shatnez* is bad, why is it okay in tzitzis? We see from this mitzvah how little we understand Hashem's ways.

Therefore, after discussing tzitis, the Torah tells us (15:39),

לא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם

"Don't stray after your heart and after your eyes." The **Maaglei Tzedek (from the Rebbe of Dezh *zt'l*)** explains, "Don't stray after your eyes and heart…" Keep the mitzvos as Hashem commanded, and don't ask questions and don't debate matters, because our minds are too small to challenge and question Hashem's ways.

Self-Image

The Midrash states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu forgave them for saying **ונהי בעינינו כחגבים** 'We felt like grasshoppers,' but Hashem didn't forgive them for saying **וכן היינו בעיניהם** 'that's how they perceived us.' Hakadosh Baruch Hu told them, 'How do you know how I had them think of you? Perhaps they thought you are *malachim*.'"

The **Sfas Emes** (**תר"מ**) asks that Rashi (quoted above) writes that the *meraglim* heard the Canaanites saying **נמלים יש בכרמים כאנשים** "There are ants in the vineyard that look like humans." That's how they knew what the Canaanites thought. So why does the Midrash say that Hashem didn't forgive them for saying **וכן היינו בעיניהם** , that the Canaanites perceived them to be like ants?



The Sfas Emes answers that the problem began with their negative self-perception. This influenced others to look at them in that negative way. "Since they were small in their own eyes, and they considered themselves like grasshoppers, this caused others to see them that way.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* explains that their negative image was their primary sin. Therefore, Moshe told the *meraglim*, **והתחזקתם** - "strengthen yourselves." Think good about yourselves. everything is dependent on man's self-image."

This is an important lesson. Many people have a low self-image and think everyone is looking down at them. But you don't know what others are thinking. Perhaps Hashem put into the hearts of others

to look up to you and consider you special. But one thing is certain: If you look down at yourself, others will look down at you, too.

A mashal is told about a yungerman who felt unnecessary in the world. At work, it was rare that someone would speak to him. When he walked on the street, no one ever stopped him to ask for directions. Young children didn't ask him to help them cross the street.

Once, he saw an advertisement for hats being sold at a very low price. It must have been years ago since he bought his last hat, so he took advantage of the sale and bought himself a nice, brand-new hat. He decided to leave his old hat in the store because he didn't need it anymore, and he would leave with his new hat.

Walking home, he was surprised when someone stopped him and asked him for directions, and that children asked him to help them cross the street. When he got home, his wife greeted him joyously. He was surprised again; that didn't happen often. She asked him about his day. He pointed to his hat, but she didn't understand. So, she asked again, "How was your day?" He pointed to his hat again.

"Is something the matter?" she asked. "Why are you pointing at your hat?" He took off his hat, and he saw that by accident he was wearing his old hat. He had left the new one in the store.

So, what changed wasn't his new look but the way he perceived himself. He thought he looked respectable in his new hat, and his feeling of self-confidence caused others to respect him too.

It is as the Sfas Emes teaches, "Since they were small in their own eyes, and they considered themselves like grasshoppers, this caused others to see them that way. Because everything is dependent on man's self-image."

The Kotzker zt'l said that the *meraglim's* primary *aveirah* was that they said **וכן היינו בעיניהם** - that the Canaanites consider them to be

like tiny grasshoppers. Because why should other people's opinions make a difference to you?

This famous lesson from the Kotzker is an essential lesson. Some people are constantly concerned about what others are thinking about them. "Do they respect me? Are they looking down at me? Do they think I'm acting good or bad? Are they impressed with me?" We shouldn't be occupied with these thoughts because our goal is to please Hashem, not people. What others think is irrelevant.



Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

In this week's parha, the Torah tells us spies were sent in to Eretz Yisrael to spy the land, to see what it was like, to see if it was fitting for them.

Rashi at the beginning of the parsha asks the famous question, "why is it that at the end of last week's parsha, we ended off in parshas Bahalosecha with the subject of Miriam?" – Miriam speaking loshan hora about her brother, Moishe Rabeinu. Why is it, that we begin this week's parsha with the incident of the spies? What is the connection? Why are they adjoined?

Says Rashi, who brings a Medrash Tanchuma that says simply that Miriam was stricken with Tzaraas because she spoke bad about her brother.

אֶלָּא שֶׁהָיָה צָפוּי לִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, שֶׁיִּהְיוּ בָּאִין וְאוֹמְרִין לָשׁוֹן הָרַע עַל הָאָרֶץ. אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, לֹא יִהְיֶה לָהֶם פִּתְחוֹן פֶּה לוֹמַר, לֹא הָיֵינוּ יוֹדְעִים עִנְיָנוֹ שֶׁל לָשׁוֹן הָרַע מַה הוּא. לְפִיכָךְ סָמַךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא הָעִנְיָן הַזֶּה לָזֶה, כְּדֵי שֶׁיֵּדְעוּ הַכֹּל עָנְשׁוֹ שֶׁל לָשׁוֹן הָרַע. שֶׁאִם בִּקְּשׁוּ לוֹמַר לָשׁוֹן הָרַע, יְהוּ מִסְתַּכְּלִין מַה נַּעֲשָׂה בְּמִרְיָם. אַף עַל פִּי כֵן לֹא רָצוּ לִלְמֹד

The Holy One, blessed be He, put this [story] next to the one [in which Miriam was afflicted with leprosy, because she had spoken slander against her brother. [This was] so that everyone would know the punishment for evil speech. [It was a warning] so that if they came to speak slander, they would consider what happened to Miriam; but even so, they did not desire to learn.

As Rashi says: **למה נסמכה פרשת מרגלים לפרשת מרים, לפי שלקתה על עסקי דבה שדברה באחיה, ורשעים הללו ראו ולא לקחו מוסר** – The people witnessed it, but they didn't learn the lesson. They didn't take the mussar! They didn't internalise it. It didn't change them. That is an incredible thing!



Says **Reb Yeruchum in Daas Torah** that of course, the main aveira was a lack of bitachon. And that is why they sent in the spies and they were punished.

But it goes beyond that. There are so many times in our lives that the Riboino Shel Olam is showing us and pointing to us, but we just don't get it!

There was an article in the Jerusalem Post, talking about the situation in Israel. Boruch Hashem, we had so few numbers killed, However, every single person is choshuv, and it was tragic that not everybody made it through. But, compared to everywhere else in the world, we have more people living in Eretz Yisrael then New York. And look at the difference – incredible. Why? Because of the strength of government, the ministers, the army?

Do you not get it? Don't you see that Hashem is running the world? He is leading Eretz Yisrael to be better then everywhere else, because this is His land- this is our land.

And here we have in this week's parsha, go and spy out the land, to see if it is good! Hashem promised us that this is our land. Yet something can be in our face, and we don't even realise it. We don't even appreciate or understand it.

There was a story in 2007 where there was a bad situation where 1500 missiles were fired into Eretz Yisrael. There were no casualties. The BBC held an interview with one of the top Hamas leaders. The interviewer asked, "You sent so many missiles, and you basically missed every single target, are you not embarrassed? He replied, "absolutely not, we are very accurate. We have advanced systems. But there is always a slight wind that sends the missiles off target."

"Are you serious, asked the interviewer, all 1500"?

We do the very same thing in our lives. We don't always see the Yad Hashem. **The Chovas Halvavos** teaches us that every Yid should make a point of looking at the way the Riboino Shel Olam created the world and maintains the world. We need to gain an appreciation for Hashem's gadlus and the chessed that he keeps doing for us.

And that is the message of the parha. Look into the world, look into the b'riyah. Look at everything that the Riboino Shel Olam has given us outside, and in our own bodies as well. Appreciate it all and realise where it came from.

Have a great Shabbos!

R' Yosef Kahaneman ZT"L (Ponovezher Rov) Said: "We are told that when one leaves a cemetery, he should not retrace his steps precisely, rather go out in a different path from the way he came in.

Of course! How can any thinking person go to a cemetery and come back the same as he went?"

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Vechol Maaminim

Those on the 'Mizrach' Were Pushed to the Back

ויקרא משה להושע בן נון יהושע (יג טז)



An interesting din Torah was presented to **Harav Yaakov Shimshon of Shpitovka**: The gabbaim of one of the shuls wanted to expand the shul towards the mizrach side, by destroying the original mizrach wall and rebuilding it a distance away. At the end of the expansion work, a number of rows were added on the eastern side of the shul, while the original mizrach benches were pushed back.

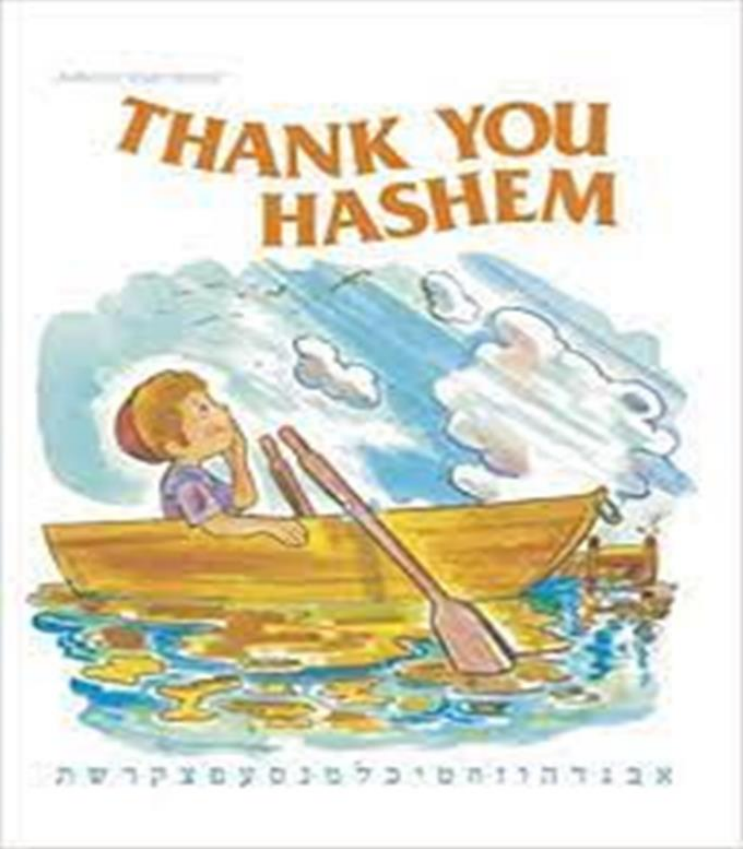
The veteran occupants of the mizrach who suddenly found themselves seated in the middle of the shul demanded that the gabbaim assign them places at the front, as they used to be. They claimed that they had a chazakah to sit on the eastern wall. The gabbaim countered that their regular places had remained where they were, and if they wanted to move to the new benches in the front of the shul, they had to pay the new rate that the gabbaim had set for these preferred seats.

Rav Yaakov Shimshon listened attentively to their claims, and finally ruled in favour of the gabbaim, based on this passuk: The Yerushalmi (Sanhedrin 2:6) says that the letter "yud" was added to the name of Yehoshua as a compensation for it being taken away from the name of Sarah Imeinu, when it was changed from 'Sarai' to 'Sarah.' The

question is, does one wrong get fixed by another wrong? Because of this addition, the letter 'hei', which until then had been first in the name of Hoshea, now became the second letter, after the 'yud.' However, we can learn from this that even though a yud was added in front of it, as long as the letter hei remains in its place, it cannot claim anything.

"So, too," the Rav said to the plaintiffs, "you remained in your original place. What do you care if a few 'yuds' (Yidden – i.e. Jewish people) were added in front of you?" (*Shemuos Tovos – Razin D'Oraisa)*

Essential Rabbi Nachman - How are you?



When someone asks his friend how he is and the friend says, "Not good", this can be an opening for trouble. Because Hashem says: "You call this not good? I'll show you what not good is!"

But if when his friend asks how he is, he answers brightly, "Good, thank G-d!" even though things really are not so good, Hashem says: "This you call good? I'll show you what good is!"

"Spiritual growth happens slowly; the tragedy is not slowness, but stopping." ~ Rav Wolbe.

The Proper Art of Eating and Seeing By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

One Friday night, Stoliner chasidim were at a zits (chasidic sit-together) and the topic of discussion was the virtue of eating properly. Some were declaring that one shouldn't eat hastily; that one should train himself to eat the food slowly and patiently. The following morning, there was a kiddush after the Shabbat morning prayers, and hot kugel was being served.

The Zitomir Rav was present, and remembering the conversation from the previous night, didn't rush to eat it. Instead, he began cutting his portion of kugel into small pieces, and before he finished, he found a pin inside. Had he eaten more quickly, he probably would have swallowed the pin and his life would have been in danger. He used to say that since that time, he always attends the zits. He saw that doing so saved his life.

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The Rebbe of Machnovka, Avraham Yehoshua Heschel Twersky, was once a guest in the home of Reb Chaim Yitzchak Cohen. After the soup, the Rebbe thanked his host and said, "It was very tasty." Reb Chaim Yitzchok was surprised. The Machnovka Rebbe was from the great tzadikim of the generation, and Reb Chaim Yitzchak couldn't imagine that the Rebbe actually tasted the food. The Rebbe sensed his astonishment and answered wittily, "What do you think? That I'm like a snake, upon which it was decreed that whatever it eats tastes like earth?" When Reb Chaim Yitzchak realized that the Rebbe tastes food, he wanted to serve the Rebbe something that he thought the Rebbe would certainly enjoy.

So, he brought the Rebbe some ice cream. The Rebbe didn't know what it was. "Its blessing is shahakol", Reb Chaim Yitzchak told him.
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After the meal, Reb Chaim Yitzchak asked the Rebbe what he thought of the ice-cream. "It's very good," the Rebbe said, "but why was it served so cold?!"

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One day after praying, an elderly chasid approached the Machnovka Rebbe. With great respect he inquired about the Rebbe's custom of sitting during the minyan, with his back to the east, facing all the other participants. "I know that this is the custom of German rabbis and Lithuanian Yeshiva heads," the chassid said. "But Rebbes generally sit facing the eastern wall, like everyone else. May I turn the Rebbe's chair around?" The Machnovka Rebbe looked at the chasid and replied, "May you be gezunt (healthy)! For twenty years I was in that country [Russia] and they prevented me from seeing other Jews; now I can look at Jews and you want to take this away from me?"

When **Rabbi Chaim Twersky, the Chernobyler Rav**, would retell this anecdote of the Machnovka Rebbe, he would add that simply looking at another Jew is not enough. "One has to know how to look," the Rav said. "It isn't enough just to look at another Jew - simply to see his face, two eyes and a mouth. One must look at another Jew and see what he needs, and how you can help him!"



The Sefer HaChinuch explains that a person is naturally influenced by what he sees constantly. Therefore Hashem gave us tzitzis as a visible reminder attached to our clothing, so that even in moments of distraction or weakness, the eye encounters a sign that draws the heart back toward awareness of mitzvos. Through repeated visual reminders, one gradually reshapes his inner world.


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K'dat Kaiser Wilhelm the Great By Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

Rav Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenberg, zt"l, the Rav of Konigsberg in Germany, was a talmid of **Rav Akiva Eiger, zt"l**, and the author of the Sefer HaK'tav V'Hakabalah on Chumash.

Rav Yaakov Tzvi was once invited to officiate at the wedding of a girl from a non-religious home. He told this family that their daughter must agree to follow the requirements necessary for a Bat Yisrael to prepare for her wedding, but the girl refused, and because of this Rav Yaakov Tzvi refused to officiate at the wedding.

This family was very well connected to people in the government, and when the officials put some pressure on Rav Yaakov Tzvi, he realized that he was being forced to officiate, and he finally relented.



At the wedding, Rav Yaakov Tzvi stood under the Chupah and said to the Chattan for him to repeat precisely the words he was about to say, and say them to the Kallah . He said, "Harei at Mikudeshet Li, you are married to me", and the Chattan said the words. Then Rav Yaakov Tzvi continued, but instead of saying, "K'dat Moshe V'Yisrael, according to the laws of Moshe and Yisrael", Rav Yaakov Tzvi said, "K'dat Kaiser Wilhelm the Great!"

There was an immediate uproar when he said these words, and the parents demanded that he explain why he did not say "K'dat Moshe V'Yisrael." Rav Yaakov Tzvi calmly explained that this wedding was

not "K'dat Moshe V'Yisrael", since according to Torat Moshe, a Kallah must prepare herself in the Jewish way. He said, "this wedding and even my presence here was purely due to the insistence of the Kaiser, so I made sure to use the correct and appropriate words, and attributed the wording to the Kaiser, because they in fact belong to him!"

They tried to persuade him to proceed with the ceremony, but Rav Yaakov Tzvi refused. Without any other options, the wedding was cancelled and rescheduled for a later date, when the Kallah had agreed to make all the proper preparations. And at the Chupah, Rav Yaakov Tzvi proudly officiated and said the words, "K'dat Moshe V'Yisrael!" *(Torah U'Tefilah)*

Amen – 60 Amens in Shacharis

In his sefer Nidchei Yisrael (Ch. 5) **the Chofetz Chaim** calculates the number of amenim a person can accumulate each day in Shacharis. He writes: "If a person davens b'tzibbur, he will get a few dozen more mitzvos each day from the 'amens' that he answers to every single brachah that he hears.

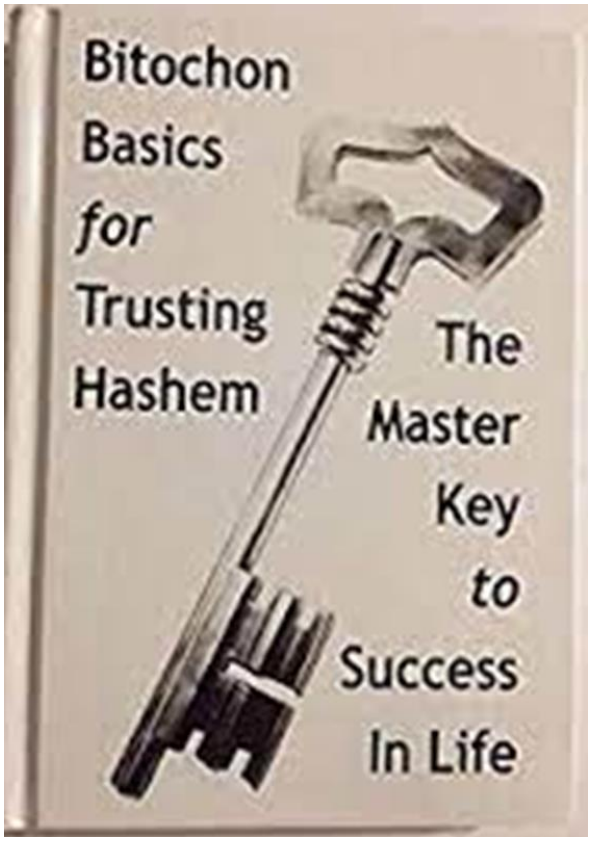
And they are: 16 amens of Birchos Hashachar, another 4 amens until Shemoneh Esrei, 19 amens for Chazaras Hashatz, and another number of amens in Kaddish that is recited in every tefillah betzibbur, which brings us to nearly sixty amens in Shacharis alone.

"The merit of one who is careful to answer amen is greater than every brachah that he hears…"

A Wise Man would say:

"Yichus (lineage) is like an umbrella; it's only impressive so long as a 'Mentch' is holding it up!"

Maaseh Emunim



One evening, when Reb Eliyahu returned to his modest home, he was welcomed by a puddle of dirty water. The washing machine, which they had bought just five years earlier at a 'bargain price' had broken down. Reb Eliyahu, who had some basic technical knowledge, quickly bent down to examine the underside of the machine, to see if he could pinpoint the problem.

He tried a few things, but it quickly became clear that it was a serious problem with the part upon which the drum was mounted, and which made the drum spin. Just to provide some background information, this machine was a low quality one, purchased at a rock-bottom price, and throughout its short life, it had broken down many times.

Over the five years, Reb Eliyahu had spent almost double the amount he had paid for machine on various repairs and parts. That was besides all the problems he'd managed to repair himself… This breakdown was the final straw. It took Reb Eliyahu just a few minutes to realize that he had to get a hold of a different machine, and quickly. His conscience did not allow him to repeat the same mistake of buying a cheap, low quality machine. His wife also gently made it clear that they had to invest in a higher quality machine, which would do the work as needed and wouldn't keep breaking down.

Reb Eliyahu, who lived very frugally, and hardly had enough to cover daily expenses, had no idea where he would get the money for this. A high quality machine cost much more than he could afford, and where would he find a second-hand machine?

He waited a day, then another, toying with the hope that perhaps something would land in his lap: a secondhand machine in good condition, or perhaps a new machine that would be offered to him for less than its true value. But after a week with no breakthrough, the mounting piles of laundry and the empty closets, his wife gently reminded him that they could not wait any longer. He had to get a different machine that very day.

Early that afternoon, Reb Eliyahu plodded heavily towards the kollel where he learned. His mind was racing, as his thoughts bounced between desperation and creative ideas. He was totally focused on the question of where he would get the money for this unexpected expense.

There were a few minutes remaining to Minchah, which began the second seder. Reb Eliyahu sat in his place in the kollel, his head in his hands, as he pondered the dismal situation. Suddenly, he had an idea. Tefillas Minchah was an auspicious time, and the One Who answered Eliyahu HaNavi at Minchah would answer Eliyahu the avreich in his tefillah. He davened a very lofty and spiritual Minchah. He invested all his energy into it and poured out his heart in prayer to the Almighty to send him assistance and find him a way to bring happiness to his family with a new, working machine, that could reliably serve them for the long term.

When he finished davening, Reb Eliyahu landed back in the world of mundane issues. His thoughts began to race again; perhaps he should take a loan? Maybe he should ask the rosh kollel what to do? Slowly, the bais medrash emptied out. The rosh kollel also headed home and Reb Eliyahu had no choice but to strengthen his middah of bitachon. He had done his histhadlus, his effort! He had davened! Now, the salvation of Hashem can come in the blink of an eye!

The young man arrived home and climbed the three floors to his apartment. Like in a fairy tale, there was a surprise waiting for him at the door: a brand-new washing machine, made by a reputable

company, in the new packaging, stood outside the door. Absolutely stunned, he knocked at the door before opening it. His wife hurried over to greet him, her face lit up with a smile. She then shared the explanation:

"This afternoon, when I went down with the children to the park, a small truck stopped near me. A tall, strapping man got out of the cab, and he held a paper that seemed to be a delivery notice. He impatiently asked me for directions to the address on his paper. 'I've been lost on these streets for an hour already and I can't find the address,' the man grumbled. 'I own an appliance store, and I don't usually deal with deliveries,' he explained apologetically. 'Today I got stuck without delivery men, and I had to do the work myself, and then I got lost…'

I explained to him how to go to the address, and as I did, I noticed that his truck was loaded with a number of washing machines. Because the man had noted that he owned the store, I decided to try my luck and asked: 'Maybe you have a high quality machine second hand that you could sell to us for cheap?'

'No," the man replied. 'I only deal in new machines.' He was about to leave, when he suddenly thought for a moment and came back over to me: "Madam, you call this Hashgachah pratis…I remembered suddenly that for a while already, I have a new washing machine in the back of my truck.

The delivery men took it to the customer's home, and as they were unloading, the machine got a bang that left it with an ugly scratch along the whole side. The client insisted on getting a new machine, and I was left 'stuck' with a perfectly good machine, but one that I cannot sell as new. I already said that I only deal in new machines. This machine is a real annoyance for me and is taking up space in my small truck. I must get rid of it as soon as I can. Can you take it for a nominal fee, and enjoy it in good health?'

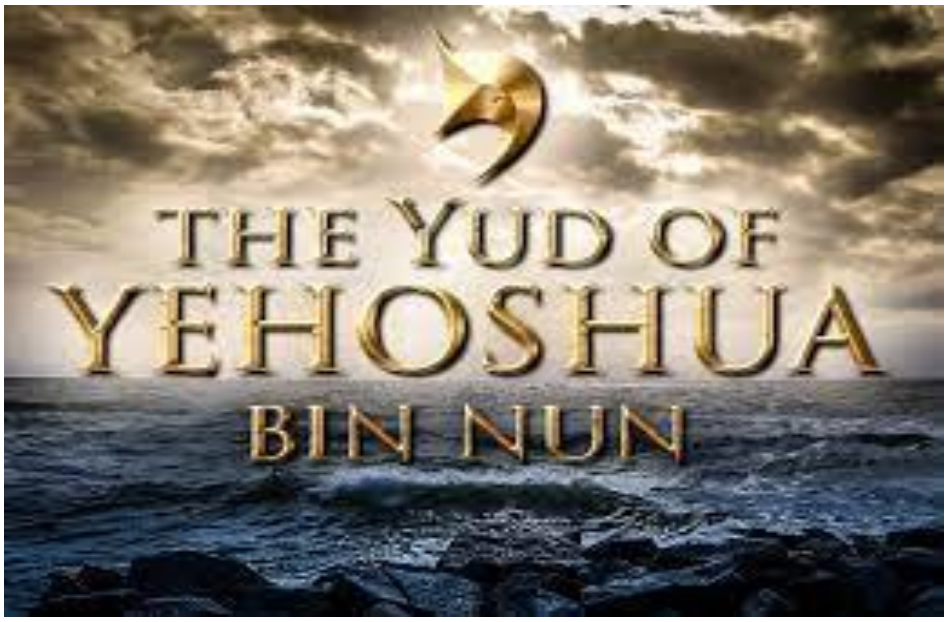
The man finished his words and waited for me to agree. I could hardly conceal my joy. I paid him a few hundred shekels for a machine worth a few thousand, and he carried the machine up to the house." Reb Eliyahu and his family clearly saw the power of tefillah, and all they could do was thank HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Who provides for all, and Who is close to all those who call to him with sincerity.

Zera Shimshon

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בִּן־נוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Moshe called Hoshea Bin Nun, Yehoshua (13:16).

Rashi explains that Yehoshua's new name signified that Hashem י״ה (yoshi'acha, should save you, from the plans of the Meraglim.

The Zera Shimshon asks why is the name of י״ה chosen to serve as a protection for Yehoshua against the plans of the meraglim? The Zera Shimshon explains that according to the Zohar, the reason that the Meraglim decided to return with a negative report about Eretz Yisroel was because at that point in time they were the leaders of the Jewish People. However, they reasoned that once they enter Eretz Yisroel, they would no longer keep their positions. Instead Moishe Rabeinu would appoint others in their stead. To keep their positions, they had to keep the Jewish people out of Eretz Yisroel. They did so by returning with a derogatory report about the land and threw the Jewish People into a panic and



they in turn rebelled and said that they did not want to enter Eretz Yisroel. In other words, the basis of the sin of the Meraglim was one of pride.

The Ari Zal writes that one who is conceited cannot have any connection with Hashem's name of יה since this name has a numerical value of 15 – the same as that of the word **גאוה** .

Therefore in order to save Yehoshua from the sin of the meraglim which was rooted in arrogance, Moishe Rabeinu added the letter י to **הושע**'s name, which now became **יהוֹשע**. Since this name now begins with the letters יה, Moshe Rabbeinu intended that this should serve to save him from arrogance.

Based on this, Rashi's words are now very well understood – יה, the name יה, should save you from the plan of the Meraglim, since indeed it was with what this name signifies – humility – that Yehoshua would be saved from the pride of the Meraglim.

As well, this explains a puzzling comment that the Targum Yonasan Ben Uziel writes. He writes, "When Moshe saw Yehoshua's humility, he changed his name from Hoshea Bin Nun to Yehoshua". The Meforshim comment a great deal on this statement.

The Zera Shimshon explains that since Yehoshua was humble to begin with, he merited this extra protection of the name יה, so that he should be saved from the plans of the Meraglim. Since they didn't have the same level of Yehoshua's humility they did not merit this added level of protection.

Tzitzis function as a safeguard against spiritual forgetfulness. A Jew moves through many environments and pressures; having a visible sign of mitzvah-consciousness preserves identity even in mundane settings. ~ Rav Moshe Feinstein.

Player or Fan? By R' Paysach Krohn



Many years ago, in the early 1950's, on the first anniversary of his father-in-law's passing, 10 Shevat 1951, **The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson** formally became the seventh Rebbe. In the 1950's, he wasn't as popular as he was later on, and not as many people went to see him. As such, he more time to speak with the people that came to him.

Of course, he lived in Brooklyn. There was a modern father who lived in Brooklyn whose son was about to be bar mitzva. So, he decided that he is going to bring his son to the Rebbe for a bracha.

The Rebbe greets them and tells them to be seated. When they get into a conversation, the Rebbe asked the boy a question to which the father was very surprised about.

The Rebbe said to the boy, "Are you interested in sport?" The boy said, "Yeah."

The Rebbe said, "What is your favourite sport?" He said, "Baseball." "Do you follow a certain team?"

"Yes, the Brooklyn Dodgers."

The Rebbe then asked the boy, "Does your father ever take you to the game?"

He said, "Yeah Rebbi, my father took me to a game a few weeks ago, and it was terrible." - The Rebbe said, "What do you mean it was terrible?"

"Well, the Dodgers were losing in the 7th innings 10-0, so we just left."

So, the Rebbe says to the boy. "Did the players leave as well?"

The boy says, "Oh, No! I'm a fan, I can leave, but the players have got to stay to the end."

The Rebbe says, "That's the lesson that I am trying to teach you. You see, you are a bar mitzva boy now. And you are excited that you can be counted as part of a minyan. That you are putting on tefillin and doing mitzvas. But after a time, sometimes the enthusiasm wanes, and the excitement wears off. So, I want to give you some advice. Just remember, all your life, hang in there – ***Be a player, don't be a fan***."

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

"כלם אנשים ראשי בני ישראל המה" ***"They were all distinguished men; heads of the Children of Israel were they."*** **(13:3)**

QUESTION: Rashi says, **ואותה שעה כשרים היו**— "At that hour they were honourable and righteous."

Why does Rashi say "at that *hour*" and not just "at that time?"

ANSWER: The spies toured *Eretz Yisrael* for 40 days and brought back a negative report which caused intense hysteria. For this sin, the people were punished to wander in the wilderness for 40 years — one year per day.

A day consists of 24 hours, and in 40 days there is a total of 960 hours. In a year there are 12 months, and thus, in 40 years there are 480 months. Hence, for each hour of the spies' tour, the stay of the Jews in the wilderness was increased by half of a month. The Jews left Egypt on the 15th of *Nissan* and arrived in Israel 40 years later on the 10th of *Nissan* (Joshua 4:19). The normal travel time

from Egypt to *Eretz Yisrael* should have taken 11 days *(Devarim* 1:2). Consequently, the 40-year punishment was in reality short 15 days.

Hence, Rashi is puzzled about the missing 15 days, and proposes the answer that "*ve'otah **sha'ah***" — "for that *hour*" — "they were *kesheirim*" — "honourable" — and therefore the community at large was spared 15 days of wandering in the wilderness. (**מטעמי יצחק**)

"ויקרא משה להושע בן נון יהושע" ***'Moshe called Hoshea son of Nun, Yehoshua.'*** **(13:16) - QUESTION:** *Targum Yonatan ben Uziel* writes, "When Moshe saw Yehoshua's humbleness, he changed his name from Hoshea to Yehoshua." Why did Yehoshua's humbleness merit him an additional **י**?

The reason Moshe omitted the letter "**י**" particularly is that it is the smallest letter of the *alef-beit* and thus an allusion to the concept of humility. (**אותיות דר' עקיבא**)

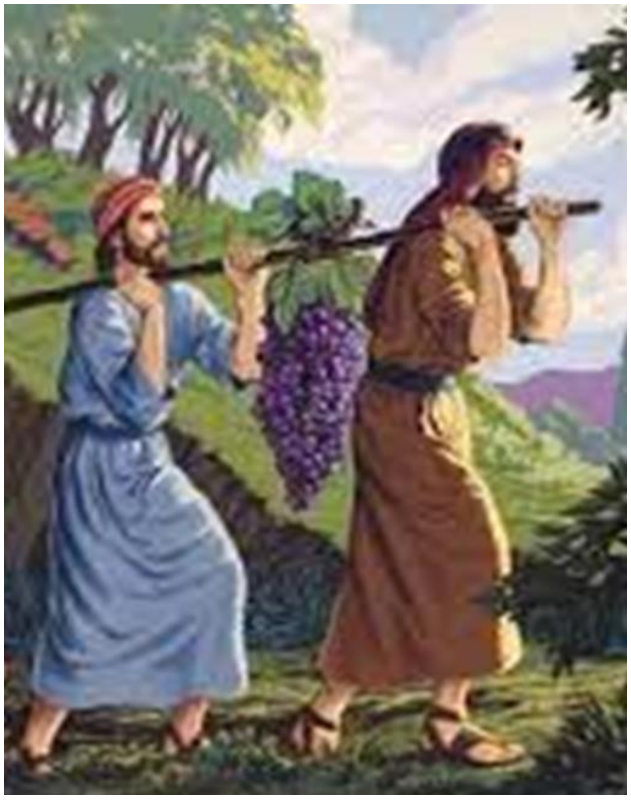
"ויהושע בן נון וכלב בן יפנה...קרעו בגדיהם" ***"Yehoshua son of Nun and Kaleiv son of Yefuneh...tore their garments."*** **(14:6)**

QUESTION: Yehoshua and Kaleiv directly announced their opposition to the spies. Why did they also tear their garments?

ANSWER: The outer appearance of a person is the first thing the eye perceives. For instance, a beard and *peiyot* are the outer signs of a devout person. Unfortunately, sometimes it is only a facade, and the person is not really what he appears to be. Likewise, clothing can be a cover-up to disguise a bodily deformity.

The ten spies pretended to be observant and G-d fearing Jews. However, inwardly they were debased and corrupt. Yehoshua and Kaleiv tore off "their (the spies') clothing (facade)" and exposed *their* true identity to the entire community.(**הדרש והעיון**)

"כי תבאו אל ארץ מושבתיכם אשר אני נתן לכם...ויין לנסך רביעית ההין"
"When you will come to the land of your dwelling places that I give you...and a quarterhin of wine for a libation." (15:2,5)



QUESTION: Why does the discussion of wine libations follow the narrative of the episode of the spies?

ANSWER: The spies brought back a fig, a pomegranate, and a cluster of grapes from *Eretz Yisrael*. These fruits were so unusually large that one man had to carry the fig, another the pomegranate, and eight others carried the grapes. They told the Jews that just as the fruit of the land was unusual, so were the inhabitants, and they thereby discouraged the Jews from wanting to go to *Eretz Yisrael*.

Since the majority of the spies used grapes to malign *Eretz Yisrael*, Hashem commanded the Jewish people that when they would enter *Eretz Yisrael* and offer sacrifices, they were to include a wine libation in order to atone for the sin which was committed by their ancestors through the grapes of *Eretz Yisrael*. (**נחל קדומים**)

The Chofetz Chaim described tzitzis as a constant companion in avodas Hashem — a mitzvah that accompanies a person throughout the day without requiring specific times or places. Because they are worn continually, they quietly influence the heart and strengthen yiras shamayim through habit and presence rather than dramatic moments.



"ואתם אל תיראו את עם הארץ כי לחמנו הם סר צלם מעליהם"
***"You should not fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them."* (14:9)**

QUESTION: If Yehoshua and Kaleiv wanted to compare the Canaanites to bread why the emphasis on *"lachmeinu"* — "*our* bread"?

ANSWER: Throughout the sojourn of the Jewish people in the wilderness, they were sustained through the manna which Moshe described to the Jews as "the bread which Hashem has given you to eat" (*Shemot* 16:16). They gathered it morning by morning, and when the sun grew hot it melted (16:21).

The spies instilled a fear in the Jewish people about the inhabitants of *Eretz Yisrael*. Yehoshua and Kaleiv dispelled this by telling them they are like "our bread" — the manna. It is only solid as long as it is in the shade, but once exposed to the heat, it melts. Similarly, their shade — i.e. protection — had departed from them and it would be extremely easy to conquer the Canaanites, because, like "*our* bread," they would melt in the Jews' presence. (אלשיך, כלי יקר)

Tzitzis transform ordinary clothing into a declaration of purpose. Clothing represents how a person presents himself to the world; by attaching fringes to the garment's edges, a Jew declares that even the outermost boundaries of his life are directed toward Hashem's will. Tzitzis are therefore not merely reminders — they symbolize placing divine intention at the borders of human action. ~ Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch.

Besamei HaTorah … R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(יג:א) שלח לך אנשים ויתורו את ארץ כנען ***Send for yourself men and let them spy out the land of Canaan.*** (13:1)

The last letters of the words שלח לך אנשים spell out the word **חכם**, wise, and the last letters of the words אנשים ויתורו את spell out the word **מות** - death.

The middle **מ"ם** is a pivotal letter— when read to the right it reads **חכם** and when read to the left it reads **מות.**

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that the Torah is hinting to the spies that if they act prudently- **בחכמה**, in the right, and not speak badly about the land, then all will be fine. But if they don't act sensibly and speak badly about the land, to the left, they will end in **מות** . (*Chaim shel Torah*)

L'Maaseh… *A Tale to Remember*



Rav Yaakov Galinsky, *zt"l*, related in a public address that once he was on a railroad platform during wartime. He said, "The Germans were advancing upon my town in Lithuania. I was a young yeshiva student, and many of us had no other plan but to put as much distance between ourselves and the Nazis. Trains were still running, and I purchased a ticket to head eastward, as far as I could get. We all figured that we were better off with the Soviets.

I got off the train in a strange location, not knowing anyone, with the winds of war threatening to blow in at any time. Where could I go? I looked for a Jewish face on the railroad platform and found none. I did notice a figure at the other end, shining shoes and wearing a cap. Jews commonly wore such caps, but then again, so did many others. I could hardly go over to him and ask him if he were Jewish and give away my identity and vulnerability.

Without uttering a word, I sat down at the shoeshine stand, and the local fellow began to work, without even establishing eye contact. After a minute or two, I turned my head to the side, and quietly muttered the first line of '*Shema Yisroel*' under my breath. I thought to myself that if the fellow was not Jewish, he would hardly take notice. The man did not look up, and continued his rubbing and polishing. But the words that escaped his lips in a whisper were unmistakable: *'Baruch Sheim K'vod Malchuso L'olam Va'ed'*, the familiar response to the first line of the *Shema*.

The fellow took me to his home and hid me for a week before I could find transportation further east. That week enabled me to survive, and to eventually reach Siberia, where I took refuge for the rest of the war."

Rav Galinsky further explained, "Fellow Jews may not know each other, but that *Shema* immediately established our brotherhood and common faith. It only takes a few words for unrelated Jews to prove themselves brothers.

Jews share a history and a belief system that unites them and makes them one. Their unity and common convictions is a mystery to others, and to some, like our enemies, our instant connection arouses jealousy and hatred. But for us it is our lifeblood. It is what keeps up going and enables us to survive throughout the generations. We can only exist through our *Achdus*!"

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Somersaults



There were great Chassidim leaders that had the custom of doing somersaults. There were two main explanations given. One was that this was done to combat depression and replace it with joy in Divine service. Another was that it was an attempt to minimize ego and pride, replacing them with submissiveness and humility.

R' Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apta (1748-1825), known as the **Apta Rav**, once somersaulted into the Lublin Beis Midrash via the window on Shabbos!

The custom of the **Tolner Rebbe, R' Yochanan Twersky** (1906-1998), was to do cartwheels/flips at different times. He had a designated time each night to do this. Other times he did this include prior to holy ritual acts such as Kiddush, before lighting Chanukah candles, before reading a particularly difficult *kvitel* (letters of request for assistance from petitioners) and at a wedding to gladden the chosson and kallah.

Why would he do this? As a form of self-erasure, known as *bitul ha'yeish*. Sometimes he would explain himself in words of rebirth and renewal, a nullification of the past and open reception for the future. Sometimes, afterwards he would say the Pasuk **כל עצמותי תאמרנה מי כמוך ה'** - all of my bones will say, "Hashem who is like You?" When he would somersault during the processions on Simchas Torah, he would proclaim *bitul ha'yesh*, and encouraged others to do so as well.

R' Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira (1889–1943), known as the **Piasetzna Rebbe**, wrote in his personal diary about this practice that he performed. He describes an occasion when he somersaulted at a Torah Scroll dedication ceremony.

Piasetzna Chassid R' Nesanel Radziner recalled, "I remember the dancing on Simchas Torah… the *bachurim* who were called up to the Polish army would come up to the Piasetzna Rebbe to mention their names, and the Rebbe would tell them to do somersaults during the dancing. In fact, the Piasetzna Rebbe himself did somersaults."

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein zt"l - The Thorny Rose



In my talks to students, I explained how *hakaras ha'tov* isn't simply recognizing that something is good. It rather refers to a scenario where something does not look good, and even there you are able to ascertain the good within. In every life situation, the good is taken note of and appreciated.

To drive my point home, I asked the girls, "What is the most beautiful flower?" "A rose," they all answered. It isn't for naught that Shlomo Hamelech in *Shir HaShirim* compares the Jewish people to a rose. We are G-d's most beloved flower in His world's garden.

But think about a rose. It has thorns and easily pricks and cuts anyone who extends their hand to grab hold of it. So how is it beautiful?

The answer comes down to how you view the rose. Did G-d create a rose with unwanted thorns, or thorns with beautiful flowers? Your

perspective will determine if you see the thorns as something good or not. Are the thorns an asset or liability?

Knowing this, I posed the question to the hundreds of girls seated in an auditorium. "Many flowers don't have thorns. Why then did Hashem make it that roses have thorns? G-d should have left the most beautiful flower without any!"



A sixth-grade girl meekly raised her hand. "Rabbi Wallerstein, it's because Hashem wanted to protect His most beautiful flower."

She nailed it.

I remember planting fruits and vegetables each spring in my home garden, and every year, the chipmunks, rabbits, squirrels and cats would eat them all. It was almost as if I was planting the fruits and vegetables for them! But the only flowers they never got to were the roses. The rose bush remained intact. And that's because of the thorns protecting it.

When Shlomo Hamelech called us G-d's rose, he was alluding to the fact that we are Hashem's most precious nation, and therefore Hashem provides us with extra protection. We are His children, and He watches over us with added care and a close eye. Nations that have attempted to annihilate us, have been annihilated themselves. The Greek, Persian and Roman empires are no longer here, and that's because we have thorns. We have G-d's strength surrounding us and His guarantee for our eternal survival. We are His dearest flower.

This is what true *hakaras ha'tov* looks like. You can observe a rose with thorns and say, "Wow! Hashem created these thorns and then decided to place a beautiful flower on top!" Or, "Hashem creates such sharp thorns to protect the flower from predators and those

who want to destroy it!" Such an attitude comes from a mind that sees the world differently.

Abraham Lincoln is purported to have said, "I had no shoes and complained, until I met a man who had no feet." But I always wondered why Lincoln would stop crying because he met someone with no feet. Nothing changed. Lincoln still had no shoes!

The answer is that Lincoln focused on potential. The other man would never be able to have shoes, whereas Lincoln may not have had shoes right now, but he had feet. And if he had feet, he would have shoes one day in the future.

That's the greatness of *hakaras ha'tov*. You see potential. Within the bleak bitterness of thorns, you see the goodness awaiting to blossom.

We as the Jewish people, no matter what circumstances befall us, always have potential. We can always see the good, because we always know there is a future. We will endure for eternity.

And we as individuals too always have potential. Hashem will never forsake us. He will watch over us and tend to us as His most beautiful and beloved flower. Forever.

The Netziv often emphasizes that mitzvos guide the direction of a person rather than merely regulate behavior. Tzitzis, in this sense, are not only reminders but instruments that shape awareness. Human beings naturally drift toward instinct and environment; therefore the Torah placed visible signs on the edges of clothing — the symbolic "edges" of life — to ensure that even when a person approaches the boundaries of choice, he remains aligned with divine intention. Tzitzis represent the Torah's insistence that spirituality must remain present even in peripheral moments, not only in sacred spaces.

Birchas Hamazon



Harav Eliezer Geldazhler Zt'l, Rosh Yeshiva of Ohr Yisrael [who was tragically niftar in a bus accident] was makpid to always bentch birchas hamazon from a bentcher or siddur. He encouraged his talmidim to do the same.

One bochur was mekabel upon himself to emulate his Rosh Yeshivah and bentch only from a bentcher or siddur. When the bus accident occurred, this bochur, who was mildly injured, spent many hours with the family members outside the ICU where the Rosh yeshivah lay.

The bochur joined the family when they were served meals. When it came time to bentch, he discovered that there were no bentchers or siddurim around. He was in a quandary. What could he do? Suddenly, an idea came to him. He rushed to the nurse's station, requested a pen and paper, and proceeded to write down the entire birchas hamazon. When it was completed, he recited the bentching from his handwritten text!

What an awesome and auspicious moment!

The Slonimer Rebbe describes Shabbos as the weekly return of the soul to its root. During the week a person becomes fragmented by responsibilities and distractions, but Shabbos gathers the scattered parts of identity and restores inner unity. The day is therefore not only rest from labour but renewal of spiritual wholeness. ~ Slonimer Rebbe (Nesivos Shalom).

Kavod HaTorah

Harav Shlomo Freifeld Zt'l, Rosh Yeshiva of Shor Yoshuv, would avoid touching the *atzei chaim* of the sefer Torah whenever he had an Aliyah. The origin of this practice was the result of something that he considered a shortcoming on his part.

He was once tasked with bringing the sefer Torah to a bungalow colony where he was staying, but he was delayed and arrived close to the onset of Shabbos. Due to his late arrival, he handed the Torah to a young boy and asked him to bring it to shul while he hurried off to make his last-minute preparations for Shabbos.

When he thought about what he done, he felt that it had been an affront to the honour that the Torah deserved.

Going forward, he never touched the *atzei chaim* of a sefer Torah with his bare hands, always grasping it with a tallis!



The Meraglim's Error

The Sfas Emes writes in the name of his grandfather, the **Chidushei HaRim *zt'l***, that "It was indeed naturally impossible for the Yidden to conquer Eretz Yisrael." Logically, the meraglim were correct with their report. It was impossible to win a war to conquer Eretz Yisrael.

Their sin was that they failed to realize that Hashem's ways are beyond nature, and He can surely bring them into Eretz Yisroel if He so desires.

The Piaseczna Rebbe (Eish Kodesh) taught that this is what everyone should do when he faces a problem that seemingly has no solution. He should place his trust in Hashem.

Hashem has many ways to save him; the options are endless.

The Chazon Ish would often say, "Hashem helps at the moment when a person doesn't see any natural means for his salvation." Because that's when he places his trust in Hashem.

Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmastrivka *zt'l* explained, **תשועת ד' כהרף עין** when people have **הרף עין**, which means they stop looking to other people for help, that is when they receive **תשועת ד'**, Hashem's salvation.

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* writes in a letter, "I follow the counsel that the **Chofetz Chaim** would often say: 'One doesn't ask too many times from a human being.' Because what is man? Only Hashem can help."

Give Chizuk to Your Fellow Man

Reb Yehudah Neucshloss *shlita* tells that he was once walking with **Reb Chaim Brim *zt'l*** through the streets of Yerushalayim when a woman approached them. By her haggard appearance, it was obvious that she was going through difficult times.

She said to Reb Chaim with excitement, "Perele is a *kallah*!"

"That is wonderful news!" Reb Chaim Brim proclaimed happily. "Mazal Tov! Mazal Tov! How I was waiting for this day! Thank you for telling me! I'm going to tell everyone! I'm so happy to hear. Who is the fortunate *bachur*?"

She told him. Reb Chaim thought for a moment, and then he said, "Do you know who you are getting for a son-in-law? Your daughter will be marrying one of the top *bachurim* of Yerushalayim!"

The woman's face beamed with joy. "Have you heard of the **Chazon Ish**?" he asked her.

"Of course!"

"In my opinion, your chasan is the Chazon Ish of our generation. Did you hear of the gaon, **Reb Akiva Eiger**?"



Tears filled her eyes, and they began to fall, one after another. In a choked voice she said, "Of course I heard of Reb Akiva Eiger. Everyone heard of the holy tzaddik and gaon Reb Akiva Eiger."

Reb Chaim told her, "I think your chasan will be the Reb Akiva Eiger of our generation."

The woman cried and said, "How did I merit this? It must be in the merit of my parents' and grandparents' tefillos and good deeds."

"I don't think so," Reb Chaim told her. "In my opinion, it is in your own merits, and in the merit of your tefillos."

She left extremely happy.

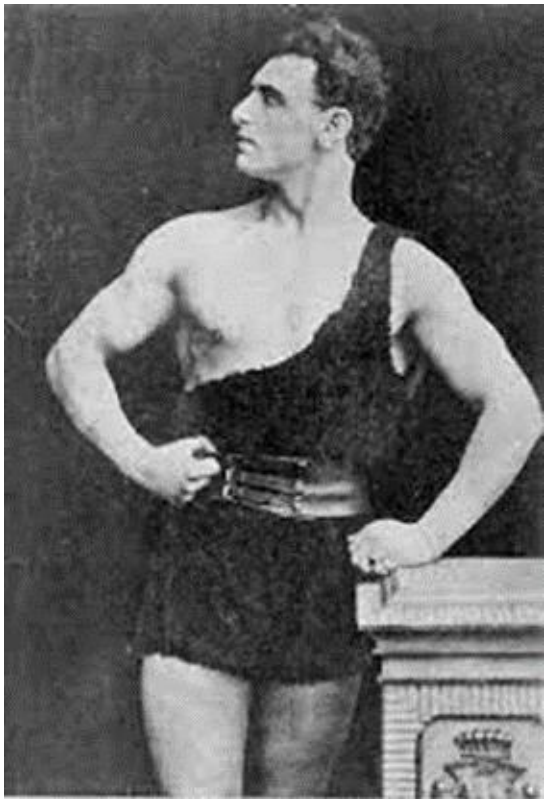
Reb Yehudah Neushloss asked Reb Chaim Brim, "Who is this woman?"

"I have no idea," Reb Chaim replied. "But I could tell that she is a broken woman, so I thought that if this mitzvah came my way, I should perform it well, so I gave her some *chizuk*."

Let's learn two lessons from this story. One: Don't lose an opportunity. Everything is bashert. If you meet with someone, there is a reason. Try to do something good.

Two: A kind word goes a long way. Give chizuk to people. Let them feel important. It's one of the greatest deeds of kindness you can do.

The Iron Yid



Yidden are known for many accomplishments, but physical strength is not one of them. In the 1920's lived a Yid called Zishe Breitbart who was hailed as the 'strongest man in the world'. He was so strong that he once pulled a wagon with 50 people in it – with his teeth!

Zishe Breitbart was born in Stryków, near Łódź Poland in 1893 to an orthodox Jewish family who were professional blacksmiths. His family discovered his unusual strength at the age of 3, when he was able to free himself from a heavy iron bar that had fallen on him in his father's workshop.



As a young boy, he was expelled from various *chadorim* for displaying his unusual strength against both his fellow students and his Rebbes.

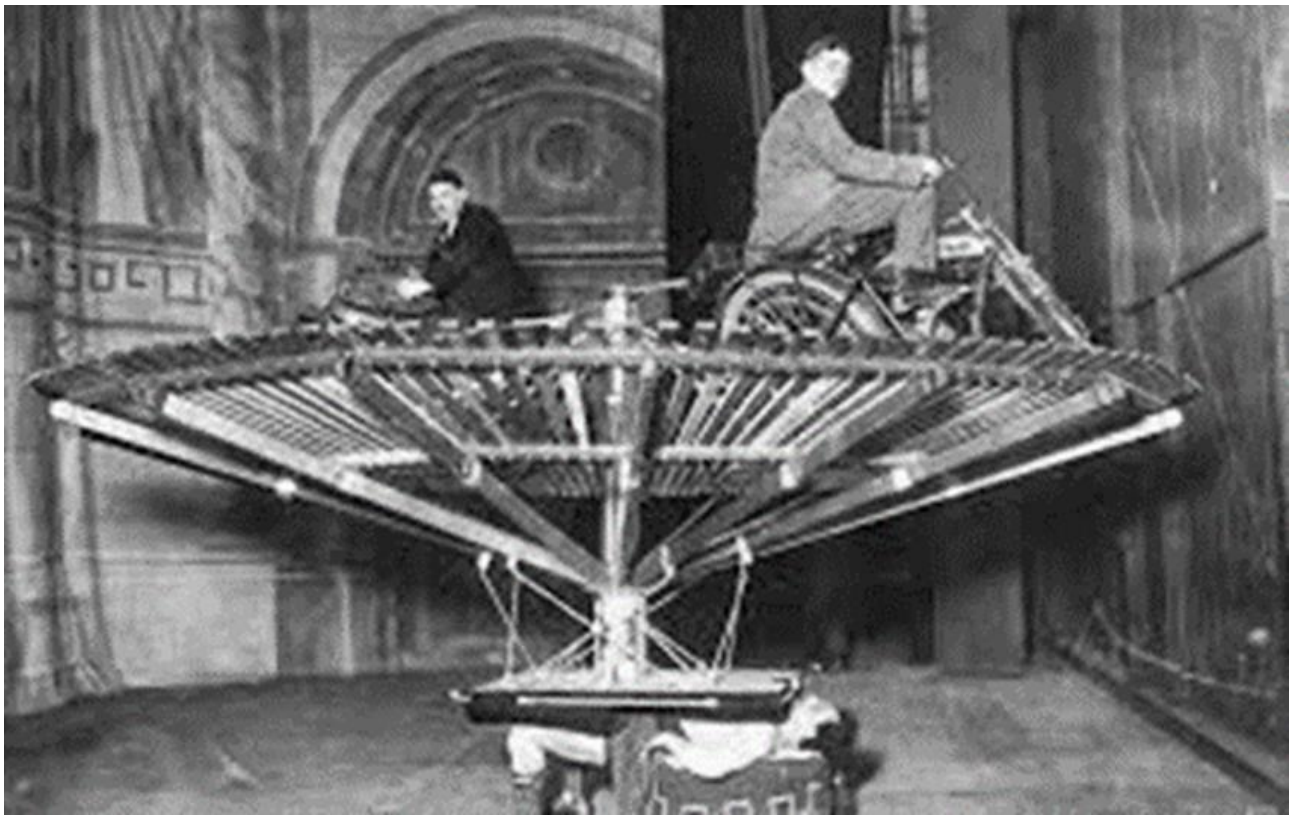
During WW1, he was drafted into the Russian army. [Poland was part of the Russian Empire at that time.] He was captured by the Germans, and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner of war. He remained in Germany after the war.

Soon after, he started performing in local markets as a performer and showman, bending bars around his arm like they were tefillin. He attracted larger crowds than similar entertainers. He was spotted

in 1919 by the director of Germany's Circus Busch which was the most prestigious circus in Europe at that time.



Zishe became a worldwide sensation. They changed his name to Siegmund and dyed his hair blond, to make him appear Aryan. [He already had blue eyes.] It was embarrassing that the strongest man in the world was Jewish and not German!



Some of his many feats of strength included:

Bending iron bars into floral patterns. Biting through chains and tearing horseshoes apart. Pulling wagons full of people with his teeth. Supporting a bridge across his chest, while bulls and elephants were paraded over him. A routine where two men chased each other, riding motorcycles on a motordrome [which had a combined weight of over 5000lbs – all supported on his chest. He would hold back two horses with his teeth that had been whipped in different directions. He would rip solid steel sheets 5/8" thick and 3 feet long with his bare hands. Lifting a baby elephant in one hand while holding a locomotive wheel in the other hand with 3 men suspended from it, and at the same time, climbing a step ladder!



All these routines and more are well documented and authentic.

He was very proud of his Jewish roots and identity. He was generous to Jewish charities and fed lunch to the whole of his village every day. He liked performing back in his native Poland, as it gave him the opportunity to visit *kivrei avos*.

He visited the Radzyner Rebbe [**Grand Rabbi Shmuel Shlomo Leiner** (1909–1942) -the fifth Rebbe of the Izhbitza – Radzin Hasidic dynasty]. When he visited the Jewish schools, he delighted the children by picking them up -7 at a time! He visited sick people in hospital and played the cello for them. He was a big supporter of the local Jewish soup kitchens. He was a traditional Jew who went to shul every Friday night and Shabbos morning.



When on tour in Europe in 1925, he cut his leg accidently with a rusty nail whilst performing a routine in which he would hammer railway spikes into wooden planks with his bare hands. The wound got infected, and he contracted blood poisoning. As a result of this accident, he underwent 10 operations and resulted in the amputation of both his legs.

He never recovered from this, and after 8 weeks of suffering, he finally succumbed to the infection and died at the age of 32. [Anti-biotics and Penicillin had not yet been discovered.] He is buried in the Adass Jisroel cemetery, Berlin.

At his massive funeral, the Chief Rabbi Dr. Ezra Munk, gave the *hesped* and said that Zishe Breitbart won the hearts of millions of people worldwide and disregarded all the glory and honour accorded to him by the world at large - for Zishe never forgot that he was a Jew.



Rav Yeruchom Levovitz (1873-1936), [also known by his hundreds of students simply as 'The Mashgiach', was the famous mashgiach ruchni and baal mussar at the Mir yeshiva in Belarus.] mentions Zishe Breitbart in his sefer "Daas Chochma U'Mussar" on page 56. He said that when Zishe became very ill at the end of his life, he did not have the strength to even hold a pen in his hand.

"That same hand that was once able to break and bend iron bars, now trembles from the weight of a light pen! People think that holding a pen is so simple – there is no skill or strength needed for that. But even holding a pen is a divine gift, without which we would not be able to hold anything."

We take many things for granted: Our eyes, hands, legs, lungs, families, livelihoods etc. Therefore, we need to be *makir tov* – be grateful for every single thing that Hashem does for us.

Rav Yeruchom also mentions Zishe Breitbart in his sefer "Daas Torah" (Vayikra, parshas Metzora) during a chumash shiur that he gave to foreign bochurim in the Mir Yeshiva. He writes:

"Fear of Hashem is inherent within the Jewish People. Their exercise of self-control is beyond the laws of nature and taps in to the supernatural. This is a new type of strength that enables a person to programme oneself and to be able to exercise this self-control.



This is compared to Zishe Breitbart who he calls ***'Athletic sheyaduah' – the famous athlete***, who displayed extraordinary strength. He was able to lie on a bed of nails without any of them piercing his skin. People would shatter large boulders with

sledgehammers on top of his chest, and nothing would happen to him. How was he able to accomplish all this?

He was able to train his mind and body to withstand the pain and for it not to affect him. That is the power of training and transforming oneself."

Similarly, with regards to our avodas Hashem, not everything is easy, but with training and attuning our minds and bodies, we can accomplish far more then we think!

Penninim al Hatorah

והאנשים אשר שלח משה לתור את הארץ וישבו וילנו עליו את כל העדה להוציא דבה על הארץ *But as for the men whom Moshe sent to spy out the Land, and who returned and provoked the entire assembly to complain against him by spreading a report against the Land. (14:36)*

וימתו האנשים מוצאי דבת הארץ רעה במגפה לפני ד' *The men, the ones spreading an evil report about the Land died in a plague before Hashem. (14:37)*

The preceding pasuk already mentioned that the spies had spread an evil report about the Land. Why does the next pasuk, which relates their punishment, reiterate their slander of the Land?

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh attributes this to their slandering Eretz Yisrael. "How can one declare a completely beautiful Land to be bad? How can a human being be so brazen?... As a result of this insurrection, Hashem's anger flared against them, and He killed them immediately."

We derive from here that speaking negatively of Eretz Yisrael is a grave sin. It is unnatural because it is contrary to the truth. One cannot transform good into bad.

Throughout the generations, our gedolim, Torah giants, were circumspect concerning Eretz Yisrael, giving it the greatest honour.

Not only were they never negative concerning anything related to the Land, but they also made a point to correct and admonish anyone who crossed the line from laudatory to disapproval.

A chassid once complained to the **Imrei Emes, Gerrer Rebbe, zl**, about the suffocating heat of summer, claiming that, in Eretz Yisrael, it was so stifling.

The Rebbe immediately explained his comment as a compliment. "In Eretz Yisrael, a Jew's spiritual connection with Hashem warms him up. "

Horav Chaim Zev Finkel, zl (Rosh Yeshivas, Heichal HaTalmud, Tel Aviv), would admonish his students during the hot days of the summer not to complain about Eretz Yisrael's hot climate. When it gets too hot, go into the shade, but do not say anything negative concerning Eretz Yisrael. Indeed, during the hot summer days when many people would walk through the streets carrying their folded jackets, he would be meticulous to wear his jacket, so that no one would conjecture that he had a problem with the heat.

Horav Dov Sokolovsky, zl, son-in-law of **Horav Avraham Tzvi Kamai, zl**, Rav of Mir and founder of the Yeshivah, related the following frightening story:

A wealthy Jew once made his home in Mir, Poland. He was an honourable man who contributed towards every davar she'b'kedushah, holy endeavour. He did so happily, and he did not wait to be asked. It was during that period that the movements to emigrate to the Holy Land were in vogue. This man became impassioned by the fervour to move, and he decided to join the Jews who were prepared to build up the Holy Land. He sold all his assets, transformed them into liquid assets, and prepared to leave.

It was a difficult journey, one which took its toll on the ship's passengers. He survived the trip and, before long, his ship came into port. He loaded up his baggage and left for Yerushalayim. Months

passed and suddenly, as if out of nowhere, he appeared on the streets of Mir.

The city was in an uproar. What catalysed his return? He had been so excited about settling in the Holy Land, only to return a few months later. It was unreal.

"Why are you here? What made you come back?" he was asked by anyone whom he met. Finally, he said, "Fine, I will address the entire community on Thursday night."

The following Thursday night, the shul, which was the city's largest venue, was filled to capacity. The wealthy man walked in, and a hush settled on the room as he rose to the lectern. He began by extolling the holy sites which he had visited. He was spiritually infused with the Land's sacredness. How fortunate he was to have walked on the same roads that had been visited by the great Tannaim, Amoraim, Rishonim and Achronim.

Then he stopped and said, "But this all pales in comparison with the travail which is a daily experience for the Jewish community. The poverty and deprivation to which they are subjected is unreal. I have never seen such poverty, such adversity. The food they eat is fit for animals." He stopped for a moment, as if preparing for the knockout punch that would define his entire speech:



"Believe me, my friends, it is far better to be a ***shepselah*** - sheep, in Mir, than a person in Eretz Yisrael!"

The moment that he finished his slanderous speech, a cry emanated from his mouth, accompanied by his body shaking uncontrollably. He began to make movements like a sheep, with the only sound emanating from his mouth being, "Bah, bah!" just like a sheep.

At first, the congregation thought that he was acting out his "sheep" speech, but a while later, it became sadly evident that he had incurred a terrible Heavenly punishment. One does not slander Eretz Yisrael; one does not speak negatively of Hashem's Land!

Rabbi Yoel Gold – Bring on the Blessing

מירון תשפ'א



It happened in one of the holiest places on one of the happiest days. 45 kedoshim, would return their holy souls to their Maker in an unimaginable tragedy. Thousands of Yidden came from around the country and beyond to cry with the families and try to comfort them as much as possible.

Chaim Ginz, a sofer in B'nei B'rak was determined to visit the families and try to comfort them through his own experience. He had just gone through a painful experience in which his five-year-old daughter passed away. He felt that whatever strength and chizzuk he gained and went through, should be shared with others who needed it.

The very first family that he visited was the Zekbach family as they were his neighbours. They lost their 24-year-old son – Menachem. A

Kollel youngerman and recently married. He saw that the family were handing out bentchers. On the cover was written, "The last will of Menachem Asher Zekbach was to bentch out of a bentcher."

He asked, "How could such a young man leave a will?" They replied , "He made a commitment 8 years ago on erev Yom Kippur to always bentch out of a bentcher."



He was so meticulous to bentch out of a bentcher, that when he went to a simcha, he would not wash for Hamotzi unless he had a bentcher.

Chaim came to give strength and chizzuk, and it turned out that he was the one who received the strength. He decided to take upon himself this same kabbala to always bentch out of a bentcher.

Four weeks later Chaim had just finished a project of writing a sefer on Navi. He was looking for new opportunities to make a little more money. He went to different potential clients. They all said that he writes nicely, but there is something missing within the writing. He realised that his writing wasn't quite up to standard and had thoughts of dropping *safrus* and taking up a different profession.

He felt so rejected. So, he went for a walk and popped into one of the many bakeries in B'nei B'rak. He took it to one of the rooms where sofrim would often go and write. He washed and ate. He was about to bentch, when he realised that he had recently taken upon himself to bentch inside. Now that he was in a low mood, didn't mean that he could bentch by heart.

He made the extra effort and started searching for a bentcher high and low, checking the draws and shelves. Finally, after a few long

minutes of searching, he found a stack of papers on of the top shelves of a cupboard. Amongst them was a bentcher.

The bentcher was printed in K'sav Ashuris – the very same font that the sofrim write with. It was a very beautiful print. He thought, maybe he could get some inspiration from this to improve his own handwriting. He took the bentcher and started copying every letter slowly and meticulously until he could write in the same beautiful way. He spent three hours writing out the entire bentching.



Not more than 5 minutes later, someone knocked on the door. His friend came in and told him that he was offered a new project, but he was swamped with work, and would Chaim like to take it on.

He said, "Of course, I have been searching for a new project."

However, the friend said, "The client will require a sample of your writing."

So he gave him the page of bentching that he had just written.

Half an hour later, the friend calls Chaim and tells him. "I am here with the client, and he is absolutely blown away by the beauty of your writing. The family want to commission you to write a sefer Torah."

Chaim was so excited. "tell me, who is the family?" He replied that there is a chosheve man in Borough Park whose name is Reb Shmuel Dovid Freedman. He wants to help the families whose loved ones died in Meron. Every family who lost a loved one will receive a sefer Torah in their memory!"

Chaim said, "Wow! Who is the family that I will be writing the sefer Torah for?"

His friend said……. The Zekbach family in memory of Menachem Asher Zekbach!



Chaim said, "I can't explain it. It felt like Hashem was smiling down on me. To hear that I will be writing the sefer Torah in memory of the very person who inspired me to bentch out of a bentcher to begin with… that completely blew me away!!"

Chaim's incredible sequence of events points to a truth that was already written hundreds of years previously by the **Sefer Hachinuch**. He says: In Parashat Eikev (*Devarim* 8:10) we learn that there is a Mitzvah DeOraysa of Birkat HaMazon/Bentching. The Toras Hashem tells us וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹקיךָ עַל־הָאָ֣רֶץ הַטֹּבָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַ֖ן לָֽךְ׃ ***"And you will eat, and you shall be satisfied, and you will bless Hashem, your L-rd, for the good land that He gave you."***

The Sefer HaChinuch (*Mitzvah* 430) writes it is a Segulah for Parnassah, livelihood, and it is the only such Mitzvah in the entirety of the Sefer HaChinuch.

שכל הזהיר בברכת המזון מזונותיו מצויין לו בכבוד כל ימיו "Anyone that is careful with bentching, his needs will be provided for, with honour and dignity – his entire life"

It takes just a few minutes to slow down and pay attention to the words of bentching. That alone can instil in a person a sense of

gratitude, a sense of security, and brings so much blessing into our lives.

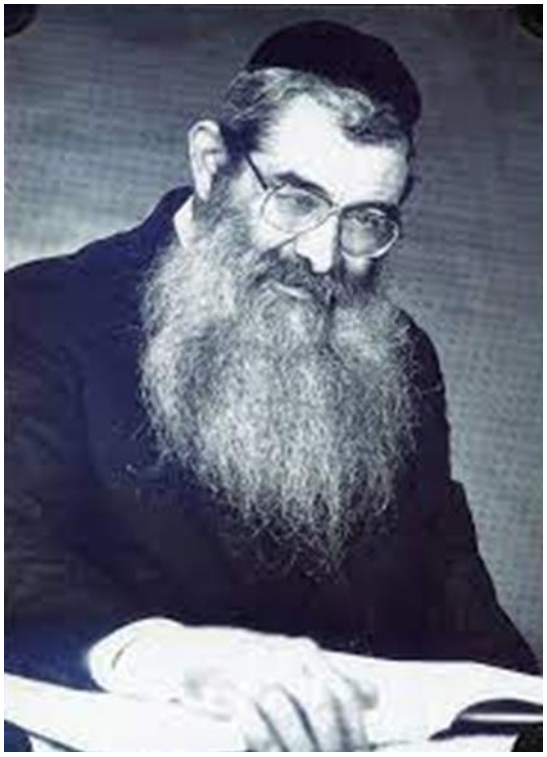


BENTCH LIKE A MENTCH

Invest in bentching inside a bentcher. Understand and feel the words that you are saying. Because the returns are well worth it!

Etz Hachaim – CT Blau

We know that a bracha from a Tzaddik that is loyal to Hashem can also have a major impact and change a negative **גזירה** if we are **מאמין** in the Tzaddik's Bracha.



I heard the following story from **Rav Moshe Aron Stern זצוק״ל** It happened a few years before Rav Moshe was **נפטר**. A talmid of Rav Moshe was once sitting and discussing something with Rav Moshe and in walked in a Chosson and Kallah who were crying bitterly. Rav Moshe said, "Kinderlach what is bothering you?"

They asked, "Can we speak to the Rov privately?" The Rosh yeshiva asked his talmid to go out of the room. After the talmid left the room the woman said to Rav Moshe that they were not married yet and they just found out that the Chosson has a specific machla **ל״ע**. She asked what should they do regarding their shidduch . They had no other reason to break the shidduch and if R' Moshe paskened to go through with the

shidduch, she was willing to do so , even though it meant that after a year or two she might be al one **ח״ו**.

When she finished speaking, Rav Moshe immediately began crying. Rav Moshe walked to the side of the room and recited a few kapitalich of Tehillim shedding tears like a little baby.

Rav Moshe came back to them and said as follows (in yidddish) "Tairah Kinderlach, in my years I have asked the **רבונו של עולם** thirty-eight times to do something that was extraordinary, and He never turned me down, this will be the thirty-ninth time. If you promise me, dear children, that you will never again mention the name of the machalah , and you will make as though you completely forget about it. You will not go to any doctors, (the doctor had already said it was very very serious) and do not take any medications, and never mention a word about the sickness again." Rav Moshe ended, "Then, go, get married, and have hatzlacha."

And so it was, they got married and the machala completely disappeared - **צדיק גוזר והקב״ה מקיים.**

Now, because these **גדולים** devoted their life and soul and every breath of theirs only for the **רבונו של עולם** - they were **זוכה** to a level like this.

Rabbi Shlomo Landau – Real Value

There was an old man that was on his deathbed. He called his children to give them his 'Last Will & Testament'. He said, "Go into the room next door, and open up the cupboard. Underneath a pile of clothing, you will find a large safe. Bring the safe here."

The children were sad about their father but were quite excited with this new revelation. Maybe we will see some amazing stuff. The father told them to open it up. Inside was the most fascinating array of every single currency in the world that existed. There were Swiss

Francs, Dollars, Euros, Roubles, Yens, everything was there. The father then said, "Look under all the money." There was a paper package there. "Unwrap the paper." So, they opened the paper wrapping and inside was a beautiful diamond!

The children looked at their father, and said, "Wow, we didn't know that you had all this."

He said to them, "Let me tell you something really important… I feel that my time on this world is limited. I am going to die soon. I am asking you for a personal favour. Please make sure that you bury this safe together with me in the grave when I die."

The children looked at their father in wonderment. They were perplexed.

The father said, "Look, I am going to come to the *Olam Haemes* but I don't know which currency will be accepted. I want to make sure that when I get to the world of truth, I am not going empty handed."

The children promised that they would keep their promise to their father. Sure enough, shortly after, they buried their father together with the safe.

When he eventually reaches the Beis Din Shel Maalo, he is really thirsty. He needs a drink desperately. So, he walks over to a small kiosk, and asks to buy a cold drink. The stall owner says, "No problem, do you have money?"

He reaches into the safe and pulls out some dollars.

"I'm sorry sir, but that doesn't work here."

So, he takes out some Yen. "I'm sorry sir, but that doesn't work here."

So, he takes out some Marks, Francs, Roubles, the Pesos.

"I'm sorry, but none of those are acceptable either."

So, he reaches in and pulls out the diamond wrapped in the piece of paper. He hands it over, and the kiosk owner said, "Yes, this is accepted here." He takes the paper, flattens it out and gives the diamond back to the man.

He says, "This piece of paper has value, this is the correct type of currency here."

He looks at it, and it was a receipt for a $5 donation that he once gave to tzedakah.

When you give in this world, in Olam Habah you get back for it. Sometimes, we feel that this life is all about taking, what can we accumulate? But this is currency that has no value in Olam Habah.

The Chofetz Chaim, who brings this mashol, says that physical items and money are worthless. But the mitzvos, particularly the chesed and tzedakah, the acts of generosity and kindness, are the most valuable type of currency - That's eternal currency.

The Gold Box

The telephone rang. It was a call from his mother. He answered it and his mother told him, "Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday."

Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days.

"Jack, did you hear me?"

"Oh, sorry, Mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but I honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said.

"Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him, he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce about the many days you spent over 'his side of the fence' as he put it," Mom told him.

"I loved that old house he lived in," Jack said.

"You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said.

"He's the one who taught me carpentry," he said. "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important. Mom, I'll be there for the funeral," Jack said.

As busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before he had to return home, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time. Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension, a leap through space and time. The house was exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture...Jack stopped suddenly...

"What'swrong, Jack?" his Mom asked.

"The box is gone," he said.

"What box?" Mom asked.

"There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever tell me was 'the thing I value most,'" Jack said.

It was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered it, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken it.

"Now I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said.

"I better get some sleep. I have an early flight home, Mom."

It had been about two weeks since Mr. Belser died. Returning home from work one day Jack discovered a note in his mailbox. "Signature

required on a package. No one at home. Please stop by the main post office within the next three days," the note read.

Early the next day Jack went to the post office and retrieved the package. The small box was old and looked like it had been mailed a hundred years ago. The handwriting was difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention.

"Mr. Harold Belser" it read.

Jack took the box out to his car and ripped open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope. Jack's hands shook as he read the note inside.

"Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing, as tears filled his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch.



Running his fingers slowly over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover. Inside he found these words engraved: **"Jack, Thanks for your time!** -- Harold Belser."

"The thing he valued most was my time!"

Jack held the watch for a few minutes, thencalled his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days.

"Why?" Janet, his assistant asked.

"I need some time to spend with the people I love and say I care for," he said. "Oh, by the way, Janet, thanks for your time!"

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away." Share this story with all the people you care about. In doing so, you will certainly brighten

someone's day and might change their perspective on life...for the better.

To everyone who read this... "Thanks for your time." 😊





ראשית ערסתכם חלה תרימו תרומה "The first of your dough you shall set aside challah — a loaf as a portion" (15:20)

The word **חלה** is an acronym for the early connections that parents make between a child and Hashem.

The **ח**, which has the numerical value of eight, is the *brit milah* — circumcision — which takes place when the child is eight days old.

The **ל** which is gematriah thirty, is for the *pidyon haben* — the redemption of a firstborn son — after he is 30 days old.

The **ה**, which adds up to five, is for the ruling of the *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avot* (5:22), "At five years of age the study of Scriptures should be commenced." **(מעינה של תורה)**

Rabbi Paysach Krohn



I have an aunt that passed away a few weeks ago. My Tante Faige was over 90 years old when she passed away. When I was a kid growing up in Williamsburg, she was my favourite babysitter. We were very close, and when she moved to Detroit, I always stayed with her when I spoke there.

This last Elul, when I stayed with her, she told me a story.

Most of you will remember the horrendously terrible bombing massacre which was a Palestinian terrorist attack on a pizzeria in downtown Jerusalem, on 9 August 2001, in which 15 civilians were killed, including 7 children and a pregnant woman, and 130 wounded, that took place in the Sbarro Pizza Shop.

My Tante Faige was in the shop with her daughter at the time of the bombing. She lost part of her hearing from the deafening *boom* of the explosion. She had just bought her pizza and was on her way upstairs to the 1st floor eating area.

My cousin Gitty said, "Ma, we need to get out of here right now." My tante said, "Look, I was just blown off my feet, and I have lost my shoes. There is glass everywhere, and I will cut my feet."

Gitty said, "Ma, I will carry you if necessary, we must get out immediately in case there is a second explosion."

Gitty did indeed carry her mother across the street. There was a lady who had a bookshop who was welcoming people to come in and

shelter. She said to everyone, "You can stay here for a little while, but the police are going to evacuate this whole area shortly, so we have to move from here."

So my tante said, "But I have no shoes, how am I supposed to go anywhere?"



Out of nowhere, a short man with a kippa came and brought her a pair of shoes. She said to him, "Where did you get these shoes from?" He said, "I have a shoe store just down the road. The lady here just called me to say that a lady needs a pair of shoes. Take these shoes, and remember, that you never ever have to think that you must return them, they are yours as a gift from me. Go wherever you think that you are going to be safe." And that's how she was able to get home.

I said to her, "Tante Faige, do you still have those shoes?"

She said, "Yeah, I saved them." I said, "can I see them?" Sure enough, she brought them out, and you could see the Hebrew letters of the shoe store.

And listen to what she told me….

"Ever since I came back to Detroit with those shoes, and in the last 20 years, any time that I felt that Hashem has done something to me that I want to complain about, and I want to say, 'G-d, why did You do this to me?', I take off my shoes, I go to my bedroom and put on these special shoes, and I look down, and I say 'Thank You Hashem!'

I get the chills when I tell this to you. Imagine a woman putting on those shoes from the Sbarro Pizza Shop bombing and saying, "Thank You hashem – I'm alive!"

This is a strategy that we must utilise - to be Makir Tov. We must realise, that we have so much good in this world, and thank Hashem continually for this.



Short Vort: Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

וּמָה הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הוּא יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ הַטּוֹבָה הִוא אִם רָעָה. . . And how is the Land in which they dwell; is it good or bad? (13:19)

Rav Noach Weinberg used to recount when he once met an irreligious tourist on his first trip to Israel.

"Rabbi," said the young man. "I've heard them describe this land as 'The Holy Land' but I have to tell you, I've been up to the north and down to the south, and to both sides. I've been everywhere in this trip and I didn't see a drop of holiness in this Land!"

"If you were in all of Israel," asked Rav Noach with his trademark smile, "then let me ask you, 'How many Buffefists did you meet?'"

Excuse me?" asked the young man, "What is a Buffefist?" "I did not ask you if you know what a Buffefist *is*, I asked you how many you met!"

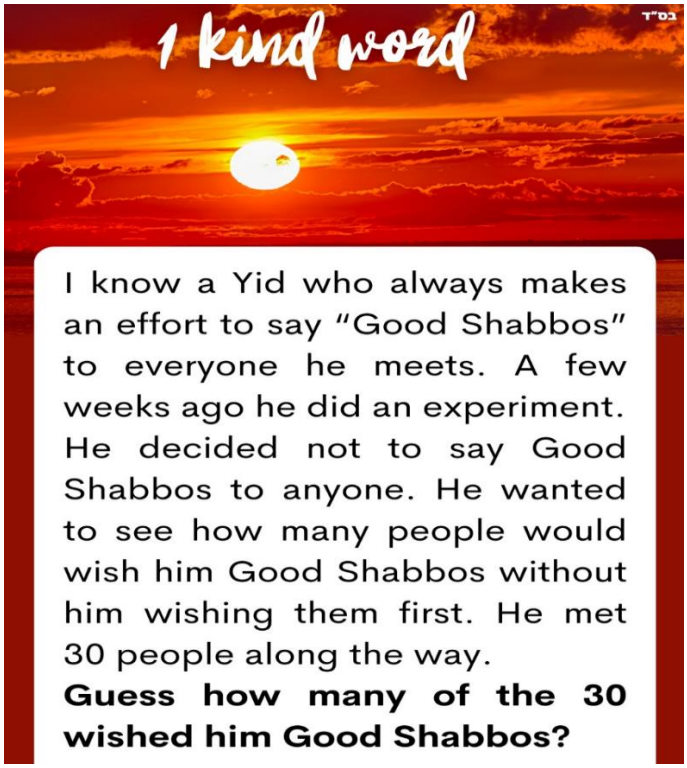
How am I supposed to know how many I met if I have no idea what a Buffefist is?" the young man responded clearly irritated by the Rabbis non-sensical question.

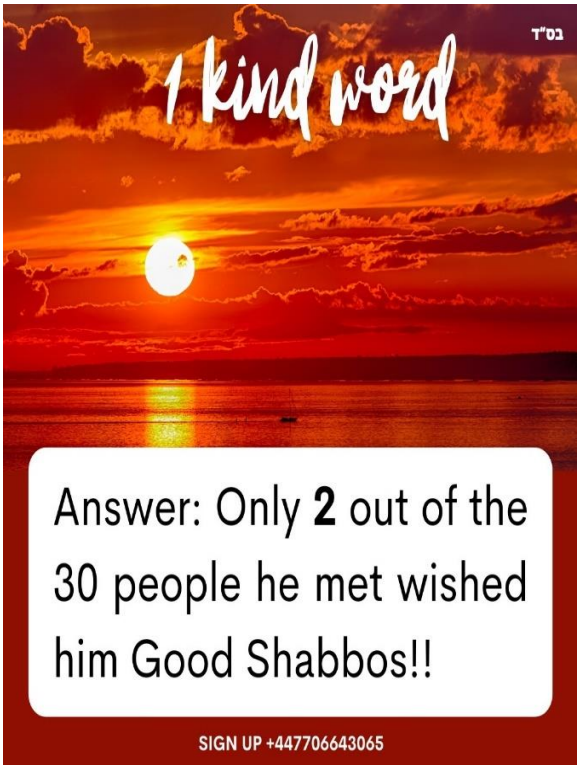
However, this was the exact response that Rav Noach had expected. "Tell me young man, do you know what holiness is to say that you haven't seen it in this Land? Were you expecting white angels walking barefoot in the streets? Or perhaps beautiful light emanating from the rocks? Without an understanding of what holiness is, how can you possibly know what to look for, and even if you find it, how would you recognize it?"

Rav Noach's words are crucial to understanding how to *see* holiness in Eretz Yisroel, but knowing how to *enjoy* the holiness in Eretz

Yisrael requires the words of **Rav Yisroel of Rozhin** who compared the Holy Land to a feathered down-quilt — something that itself does not provide warmth yet keeps the person within it warm by trapping in his own heat.

So too, explained Rav Yisrael, someone who is "cold" to holiness will not receive anything from Eretz Yisrael in return, but a person of fire and energy — specifically for Torah and mitzvos — will receive holiness and warmth from Eretz Yisrael in return.





That same Shabbos, I met a woman, who told me that she was walking along the street when a man wished her a 'Good Shabbos'. She said to him, "do you know me, because I don't know you?"

He replied, "No, but does it matter?

She was incredibly uplifted, that a stranger should show an interest and care for someone else that they don't even know.

Don't underestimate what a simple greeting or kind word can make to someone's life!

A Little Support by R' Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro

My father, **Rabbi Morderchai Shapiro Zt'l** said over the following memorable vort:

The Hebrew word for 'alive' is **נְשָׁמָה.** The Hebrew word for 'desolate and void' is **נְשַׁמָּה.** (see Haftorah on Parshas Parah)

How could it be that 'alive' is **נְשָׁמָה** and the antithesis – 'to be empty and feel so desolate and alone' , is **נְשַׁמָּה?** The words are virtually identical. They are the same four letters **נשמה.**One means I am alive, and the other essentially means, that if nobody cares, why should I get out of bed in the morning.



My father said beautifully: There is one difference between **נְשָׁמָה** and **נְשַׁמָּה.** Under the **ש** of **נְשָׁמָה** is a **קָמָץ [◌ָ]** whereas under the **ש** of **נְשַׁמָּה is a פַּתַח [◌ַ].**

How do you turn a **פַּתַח [◌ַ]** into a **קָמָץ [◌ָ]** to turn **נְשַׁמָּה** into **נְשָׁמָה ?** You put a little support underneath. And when you add a little support, you create a **נְשָׁמָה!**

People that have no support, that never get somebody to wipe away a tear or an arm around their shoulder, a phone call , a visit, a Shabbos invite, they may feel that their life is like **נְשַׁמָּה.** But if you add a little support, that one kind word or that one phone call it could save someone's life.

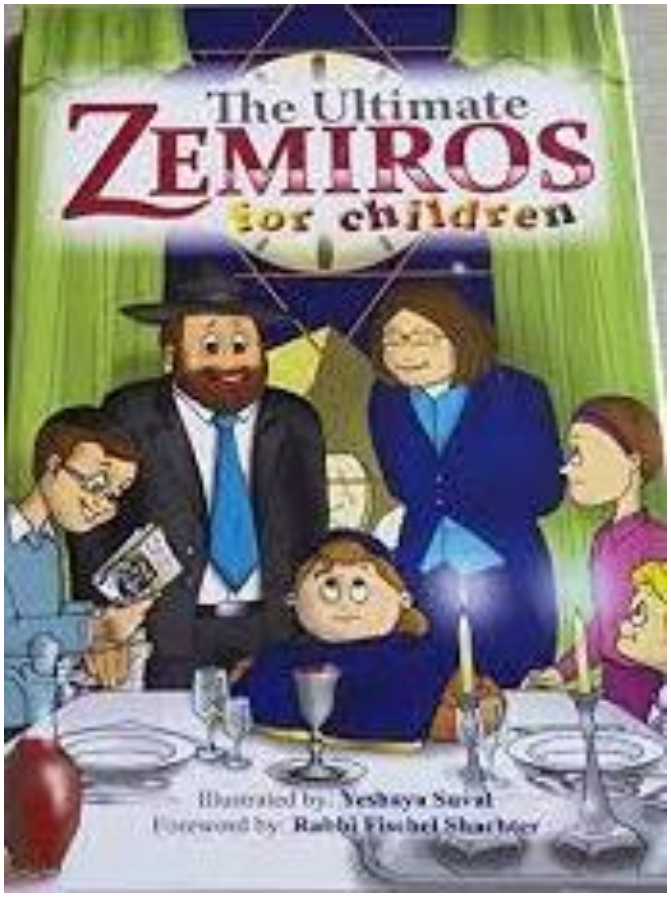
The Baal HaTurim says on **וָאֶתְחַנַּן** 3:23 **חזקתי את ישראל אולי ירחם עלי** ***"I encouraged Israel. Perhaps He will have mercy upon me."***

The Riboino Shel Olam allows us to impact, influence and affect other people with the gifts that we have.

Use it, spread it, don't abuse it! It is a priceless gift from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **חזקתי את ישראל** - all that it takes to create that **קָמָץ** from a **פַּתַח** is a little support.

That invitation or kind comment might just be all that person might need to create a **נְשָׁמָה**.

Fascinating Insights Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Tearing Tunes



With all those zemiros that we sing, what do we accomplish?

The word **זמירות** means to prune as in **לא תזמור** - As a gardener prunes his trees, thereby removing the inferior branches for the purpose of improving the fruit-bearing ability of the superior ones, so too our emotional, joyous recitation of the zemiros is designed to remove the impure barriers separating us and Hashem and liberate the soul from the weekday to its Shabbos dimension.

Now let's listen to the amazing words of **R' Yaakov Emden** [*Siddur Yaavetz*]: "***The words of Shabbos zemiros are culled from pesukim of Tanach, Halachos, Shas, Zohar and Midrashim which pertain to Shabbos. One who says them brings good to the world. Hashem attaches Himself to him and listens to his voice. He is pleased and sustains the world so that it doesn't become destroyed!***"

The Jewish Weekly – Torah Compilations with Yossi



People are like trees. This is a message we can derive from this week's Parsha. Moshe was sending the 12 spies into the Holy Land and he gave them a list of items to notice and to report back on, one of which was **היש בה עץ אם אין** - *'find out please, he said, 'whether there is or is not a tree in the Land'.*

Now what sense can we make of this? Moshe surely knew there were thousands upon thousands of trees in the Land of Canaan. But according to our tradition, actually what he meant was, find out if there is a person who is like a tree. A person of stature, a person who everyone looks up to, a person through whose merits the Canaanites might survive. So, therefore, Moshe wanted us to know that a great individual is like a wonderful tree.

In this spirit, there is a fascinating anecdote in the Gemarah in Mesechet Ta'anit (5b), it's about a traveller who is walking through the desert, he hadn't had sustenance for a number of days and fortuitously he came across an oasis. In the midst of it, there was a lovely, luscious, beautiful fruit tree with a stream of water alongside it. He immediately ate of its fruit. He drank from the water and then he rested in the shade of the boughs. And when he woke up feeling fully rejuvenated and refreshed, he turned to the tree and he said **'אילן אילן במה אברכך'? *Oh tree, tree, how can I bless you?*** I'd like to give you a Brachah, you have been so good to me! But then he had a problem. What can I bless you with? That you would have lovely fruit - you have already got it. A lovely source of water - it is there. That you will provide shelter and shade - you do that. And then a

thought crossed his mind and he said - **יהי רצון שכל נטיעות שנוטעין ממך יהיו כמותך**,*'May it be the will of G-d that all trees planted with your seed will be just like you'.*

I believe that this is a very apposite blessing for our times. Thank G-d, we are blessed with so many trees, so many outstanding, wonderful people, walking in the footsteps of their ancestors, keeping Torah law.

May it be the will of Heaven, that their children and grandchildren and great grandchildren will be just like them. To embrace a life of Torah and Mitzvot, to appreciate the great legacy that is theirs and in turn, to guarantee that they too will be wonderful and outstanding trees, to produce a flow of outstanding generations to come.

Living Jewish - Such Was His Humility

Reb Elimelech was one of the greatest students of the **Mezritcher Maggid** and a brother of **Reb Zusha of Anipoly**. He wrote the famous sefer "Noam Elimelech" and was known to be one of the greatest Chasidic Rebbes of his time, with thousands of people flocking to see him and learn from his ways. Many of his disciples became Rebbes in their own right, his primary successor being the **Chozeh of Lublin**.

The Alter Rebbe once met with a Rav who was opposed to the Chassidic ways. The Rav asked the Alter Rebbe, "I have a sefer called "Noam Elimelech" which as I have discovered, has been written by a chassid, a disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch. I have put the sefer under the bench, but can you tell me something about its author?"

The Alter Rebbe replied, ***"Even if you would put the tzaddik of Lizensk himself under your bench, he would be silent and not say a word. Such was his humility!"***

For over a Thousand Years the Techeles is Absent




Rav Chaim Vital in Shaar HaKavvanot (Tzitizis, Drush 4) writes that Techeles represents HaShem's presence being clearly felt by all. This is why, he tells us, Techeles was only widely accessible during -- or close to -- the times when the Temple was standing. These were the times when Hashem's Presence among Israel was manifest for all to see.

After the exile and its attendant hardships intensified, however, when HaShem's Presence among His people is less evident, Techeles became "hidden" as well.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS SHELACH

Please Take My Son

I heard this beautiful story from Rabbi Yitzchak Fanger who was talking about the importance of doing our best, going out of our comfort zone, walking the extra mile, and knowing that Hashem knows everything we're doing, including the difficulties we are facing in order to do our best in order to help a fellow Jew.

He told about a person he met recently named Shachar Sha'air, a Chabad rabbi from Rechovot who told him that years ago he built a building in Ohr Yehuda in order to make a religious *gan*, a kindergarten specifically for secular children so that he could bring them closer to their Father in Heaven and their eternal heritage.

Among the parents who came to register their children was a woman who came to Rabbi Sha'air with her young son, Eliyahu. Rabbi Sha'air spoke to the mother and the child and was about to accept and register the boy when the mother said: "I must tell you, Rabbi. I don't have any money to pay you. Not now, and it's not likely that I'll have any money to pay you later in the year either."



Rabbi Sha'air was surprised by this, especially since he had a staff to pay as well as plenty of other expenses and was expecting to help cover at least some of his expenses with the money that parents would pay. As the woman and her son sat there before him, Rabbi Sha'air thought about the situation.

The Rabbi's Dilemma

What should he do? And then he said to himself, 'We don't turn away Jewish children.' And he accepted Eliyahu. The mother and child were tremendously happy and grateful, and Rabbi Sha'air knew that he had made the right decision. In fact, he knew that there wasn't even a question. When it comes to helping a fellow Jew, we must do what we can, even when it's hard.

Gan was wonderful and Eliyahu loved it. And true to her word, his mother didn't pay Rabbi Sha'air anything. And so it continued for three years. Eliyahu loved *gan*, participated with enthusiasm and excitement, and grew in his love of *Yiddishkeit*.

After those firsts three years it was time to go to school and Eliyahu and his mother wanted him to continue in the religious

Chabad school and again his mother took him to the principal who was Rabbi Shimon Sha'air, the father of Shachar Sha'air.

Again the mother and boy were interviewed and Rabbi Sha'air wanted to accept Eliyahu, who was a lovely boy who was clearly eager to learn in this religious school. And again Eliyahu's mother said candidly to Rabbi Sha'air, as she had said to his son three years earlier: I want Eliyahu to learn in your school very much and so does he, but I must tell you something – I don't have any money to pay, and I doubt that I will be able to do so during the year either.

Unable to Turn Away a Jewish Child

Rabbi Shimon Sha'air heard her, looked at the sweet Jewish boy in front of him who was growing so beautifully in *Yiddishkeit*, and came to the same conclusion that his son had come to a few years ago. 'I won't turn away a Jewish child.' And so Rabbi Sha'air accepted Eliyahu into his school, knowing that there would be no payment for his studies, not this year, and most likely not in the years to come either.

Years went by and Eliyahu was a wonderful, diligent, happy student who loved what he was learning and the Jewish life he was living. More years went by, and now it was time to go to yeshiva. Rabbi Shimon Sha'air was again approached by Eliyahu's mother who said that she and Eliyahu wanted so much for Eliyahu to learn in yeshiva but she must tell him the truth: she has no money to pay for his studies and it's not likely that she'll have any money to pay him in the near future either. "But," she added," someday I'll pay you back *b'ezrat Hashem*, with Hashem's help."

And so it was that Eliyahu began his yeshiva studies in Ohr Yehuda. He was an excellent student. He learned intensely, with great interest and perseverance. He had a sincere desire to understand and progress in his studies, and he was connected to *Yiddishkeit* not just with his mind – in his studies and adherence to halacha, Jewish

law – but also with all his heart. He strived to serve Hashem as best as he could, and to become closer to Him more and more.

Preparing for the Holy Seventh Day of Pesach

Pesach came and on the seventh day of Pesach, a very special day, the day of *Krias Yam Suf*, the Splitting of the Sea, Rabbi Shimon Sha'air went to immerse in the *mikva* before beginning his Yom Tov (holiday) prayers. He was the only one there at the time. He entered the *mikva* with great concentration, knowing that these holy waters purify the one who immerses in them.

But Rabbi Sha'air had a medical ailment in his leg, called Shoshana in Hebrew, (possibly Cellulitis), and that day the water was too hot for a person with that ailment. The high temperature of the water caused Rabbi' Sha'air's blood vessels to expand so much and so suddenly that he lost consciousness and sunk into the *mikva* waters, unconscious.

Just moments later, Eliyahu, the once secular boy from a very poor family, entered the *mikva* to purify himself before the Yom Tov prayers and immediately saw someone submerged in the *mikva* and not coming up. Quickly he jumped into the water and pulled out the man who was lying under the water, and began to try his best to resuscitate him. And as he did, he saw who it was, it was Rabbi Shimon Sha'air! Eliyahu worked and worked on his beloved rabbi until Rabbi Sha'air regained consciousness *Baruch Hashem*.

Not long after that, Rabbi Sha'air said to Eliyahu: "Please tell your mother that she owes me nothing. She has already paid me to the very last shekel."

A Wise Man would say: "A smile is a curve that can set a lot of things straight."

Short Story of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin

During World War I, **Rav Chaim Brisker, ZT"L**, had to leave the city of Brisk and settle temporarily in Minsk, where it was safer. **Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, ZT"L**, was then also in Minsk and went to visit Reb Chaim. When he knocked on the door of the house where Reb Chaim was staying, he heard the unlocking of **ten locks** in order to open the front door and let him enter!



He was understandably puzzled by the need for ten locks, and asked Reb Chaim for an explanation. Reb Chaim answered that hundreds of refugee families had descended upon Minsk due to the war, as he had. Most of these people arrived with almost nothing and were desperately wandering through Minsk begging for bread. The wealthy members of the Minsk community did not want to be burdened with feeding all the refugees, unbelievably causing many of the poor souls to literally die in the streets due to hunger.

Reb Chaim said that one is not halachically allowed to stay in a city that has such callous, terrible people living there (Rambam, Hilchos Dey'os 6,1). However, due to the war situation, he was unable to leave the city. Therefore, as the Rambam states, he must live alone. In order to acutely perceive and accentuate this status of separation, he installed ten locks on his front door!

Comment: In order to combat the wickedness of the Meraglim (spies), Yehoshua and Kalev adopted two separate measures.

Yehoshua stayed away from them, as the Rambam advises, and made it clear that he did not agree with them. Kalev acted as if he agreed with the spies, and risked being affected by their wicked ways, hoping that perhaps he would eventually be able to positively influence them.

Etz Hachaim – R' C T Blau – Jewish Names

Rav Moshe Shternbach shlit"a says that every Jew has a **נְשָׁמָה** and the word **שם** is sandwiched in the middle of the word. This tells us that a person's name is rooted and one with his neshama. His name affects his essence.

That is why Moshe changed Yehoshua's name in order to save him from falling with the spies. The added "yud" was a shemirah for Yehoshua, **ה' יושיעך מעצת מרגלים**. We see from Moshe that changing Yehoshua's name was what Moshe saw would have the power to save Yehoshua's Neshama from being lost.

The **גמרא** says **ר"ה טז:** that there are 4 things that could tear up an evil decree that is decreed upon a person, and one of them is **שינוי השם** – changing his name. A name affects a person's mazel and his character.

It Happened on a Brooklyn Subway - Paul Deutschman

There are two different explanations of what happened as the result of a subway ride taken by Hungarian-born Marcel Sternberger on the afternoon of January 10, 1948. Some people will say that Sternberger's sudden impulse to visit a sick friend in Brooklyn—and the bright world of dramatic events that followed—was part of a string of lucky coincidences. Others will see the guiding hand of Hashem's Divine Providence in everything that happened that day. But whatever the explanation, here are the facts:

Sternberger, a New York portrait photographer living in a Long Island suburb, has followed for years an unchanging routine in going from his home to his office on Fifth Avenue. A methodical man of nearly fifty, he always took the 9:09 Long Island Railroad train from his suburban home to Woodside, New York, where he caught a subway into the city.



On the morning of January 10, 1948, Sternberger boarded the 9:09 as usual. En route, he suddenly decided to visit Laszlo Victor, a Hungarian friend who lived in Brooklyn and was seriously ill. At Ozone Park, Sternberger changed to the subway for Brooklyn, went to his friend's house, and stayed until mid-afternoon. He then boarded a Manhattan-bound subway for his Fifth Avenue office. Here is Marcel's incredible story:

The car was crowded, and there seemed to be no chance of a seat. But just as I entered, a man sitting by the door suddenly jumped up to leave, and I slipped into the empty place. I've been living in New York long enough not to start conversations with strangers. But being a photographer, I have the peculiar habit of analysing people's faces, and I was struck by the features of the passenger on my left. He was probably in his late thirties, and when he glanced up, his eyes

seemed to have a hurt expression in them. He was reading a Hungarian-language newspaper, and something prompted me to say in Hungarian, "I hope you don't mind if I glance at your paper."

The man seemed surprised to be addressed in his native language. But he answered politely, "You may read it now. I'll have time later on."

During the half-hour ride to town, we had quite a conversation. He said his name was Bela Paskin. A law student when World War II started, he had been put into a German labour battalion and sent to the Ukraine. Later he was captured by the Russians and put to work burying the German dead. After the war, he covered hundreds of miles on foot until he reached his home in Debrecen, a large city in eastern Hungary. I myself knew Debrecen quite well, and we talked about it for a while. Then he told me the rest of his story.

When he went to the apartment once occupied by his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, he found strangers living there. Then he went upstairs to the apartment he and his wife once had. It also was occupied by strangers. None of them had ever heard of his family.

As he was leaving, full of sadness, a boy ran after him, calling "Paskin bacsi! Paskin bacsi!" That means "Uncle Paskin." The child was the son of some old neighbours of his. He went to the boy's home and talked to his parents. "Your whole family is dead," they told him. "The Nazis took them and your wife to Auschwitz."

Paskin gave up all hope. A few days later, too heartsick to remain any longer in Hungary, he set out again on foot, stealing across border after border until he reached Paris. He managed to immigrate to the United States in October 1947, just three months before I met him.

All the time he had been talking, I kept thinking that somehow his story seemed familiar. A young woman I had met recently at the home of friends had also been from Debrecen; she had been sent to

Auschwitz; from there she had been transferred to work in a German munitions factory. Her relatives had been killed in the gas chambers. Later, she was liberated by the Americans and was brought here in the first boatload of displaced persons in 1946.

Her story had moved me so much that I had written down her address and phone number, intending to invite her to meet my family and thus help relieve the terrible emptiness in her life. It seemed impossible that there could be any connection between these two people, but as I neared my station, I fumbled anxiously in my address book. I asked in what I hoped was a casual voice, "Was your wife's name Marya?" He turned pale. "Yes!" he answered. "How did you know?"

He looked as if he were about to faint. I said, "Let's get off the train." I took him by the arm at the next station and led him to a phone booth. He stood there like a man in a trance while I dialled her phone number. It seemed hours before Marya Paskin answered. When I heard her voice at last, I told her who I was and asked her to describe her husband. She seemed surprised at the question but gave me a description. Then I asked her where she had lived in Debrecen, and she told me the address.

Asking her to hold the line, I turned to Paskin and said, "Did you and your wife live on such-and-such a street?" "Yes!" Bela exclaimed. He was white as a sheet and trembling. "Try to be calm," I urged him. "Something miraculous is about to happen to you. Here, take this telephone and talk to your wife!"

He nodded his head in mute bewilderment, his eyes bright with tears. He took the receiver, listened a moment to his wife's voice, then suddenly cried, "This is Bela! This is Bela!" and he began to mumble hysterically. Seeing that the poor fellow was so excited he couldn't talk coherently, I took the receiver from his shaking hands. "Stay where you are," I told Marya, who also sounded hysterical. "I am sending your husband to you. We will be there in a few minutes."

Bela was crying like a baby and saying over and over again. "It is my wife. I go to my wife!"

At first, I thought I had better accompany Paskin, lest the man should faint from excitement, but I decided this was a moment in which no strangers should intrude. Putting Paskin into a taxicab, I directed the driver to take him to Marya's address, paid the fare, and said good-bye.

Bela Paskin's reunion with his wife was a moment so poignant, so electric with suddenly released emotion, that afterward neither he nor Marya could recall much about it. "I remember only that when I left the phone, I walked to the mirror as in a dream to see if maybe my hair had turned grey," she said later. "The next thing I know, a taxi stops in front of the house, and it is my husband who comes toward me.

Details I cannot remember; but I know that I was happy for the first time in many years. "Even now it is difficult to believe that it happened. We have both suffered so much. I have almost lost the capability to not be afraid. Each time my husband leaves the house, I say to myself, Will anything happen to take him from me again? "

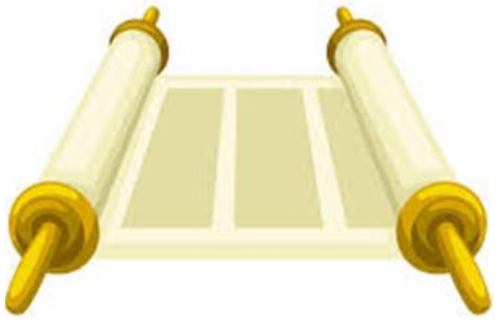
Her husband is confident that no horrible misfortune will ever again befall them. "Divine Providence has brought us together," he says simply. "It was meant to be."

Skeptical persons will no doubt attribute the events of that memorable afternoon to mere chance. But was it chance that made Marcel Sternberger suddenly decide to visit his sick friend and hence take a subway line he had never ridden before? Was it chance that caused the man sitting by the door of the car to rush out just as Sternberger came in? Was it chance that caused Bela Paskin to be sitting beside Sternberger, reading a Hungarian newspaper? Was it chance—or did Hashem ride the Brooklyn subway that afternoon?

Circle Time - Highlights from the Midrash

The Pomegranate Cave





Various midrashim tell the story of the spies and the pomegranate peel. The midrash Pisron Torah cites it as follows:

● A daughter of one of the giants in Eretz Yisrael was walking through a field eating a large pomegranate. She threw the empty peel on the ground. The Meraglim saw it and it appeared to them to be a cave, which could provide shelter from the sun. They went inside.

● Meanwhile, the giantess reconsidered. "If my father realizes that I threw litter on the floor, he'll be upset," she thought. She picked up the rimon peel, exposing the spies, and threw it out of the orchard. The spies marveled at her strength — she had picked up a whole cave and tossed it! "We're like grasshoppers compared to her!" they thought. And that is what they reported to Klal Yisrael: "We were in their eyes like grasshoppers."

● How tall were the Meraglim themselves? The Hadar Zekeinim (written by Rishonim) quotes Rav Yochanan that the Meraglim were each 60 amos tall!

● It's not a coincidence that this story happened with a rimon peel. Many sefarim (see Midrash Shir Hashirim 4:3) say that a rimon has exactly 613 seeds. The empty rimon peel was warning the spies not to empty themselves of all 613 mitzvos by speaking badly about Eretz Yisrael, as lashon hara is equal to the whole Torah!



Just Don't Throw Potatoes

אַךְ בה' אַל תִּמְרדוּ ***Just don't rebel against Hashem.*** (14:9)

The Chafetz Chaim explained why it is both sad and special to live in our generation…

The czar of Russia was going on tour. The great and mighty ruler planned to set out to see the countryside. He scheduled visits to villages and towns across the vast land; he wanted to see the people and how they lived. More importantly, he wanted *them* to see *him*, to learn about his greatness and to honour him.

The czar's office sent messages to employees of the government in every city and town, telling them about his impending visit and warning them that they had better prepare a royal welcome as befit the czar!

Sure enough, wherever he went, the czar was greeted by an honour guard, cheering crowds, decorated streets, and a hundred-piece band. The villagers tripped over themselves to show the greatest honour to the czar.

Except in one town. In a far-flung corner of Russia, the people had never heard of the czar. They were lowly, suffering peasants who knew nothing about manners, honour, or royalty.

There was one government worker in the town — a policeman. When he received the message about the czar's visit, he began to worry. The custom in the town was to get angry at any wagon that passed through, because the dust kicked up by the wheels bothered people. They usually threw rotten potatoes at the offending vehicle, which was probably what they would do when the czar's entourage caused huge clouds of dust!

The policeman called the townsfolk together and explained how the czar took care of all their needs, fought wars for them, and kept the country running. He managed to impress them, and they all shouted, "Long live the czar!"

Seizing his opportunity, the policeman said, "Look, the czar is coming for a visit. Let's all honour him as best we know how, so… no one throw potatoes, okay?"

The pasuk *quoted above describes our generation, said the Chafetz Chaim. We cannot show the honour to Hashem that the* malachim, Avos, *or early generations did. Our goal: Just don't rebel. Don't throw potatoes — don't do* aveiros!

This Date in Jewish History



The 26th of Sivan is the date of the miracle of Olyka. Olyka, Ukraine (also called Alik), was home to many Jews. In 1649, it was attacked by the brutal Bogdan Chmielnicki and his hordes of Cossacks. The Jews of the town hid in the shul, which was a big, fortified building with ancient cannons on the roof. (According to another version of the story, they hid in the castle of Prince Radzivil.)

Among the townspeople was the **Taz** (Rav Dovid ben Shmuel Halevi Segal), who had fled from his hometown, Ostroh, when the Cossacks destroyed it. The people *davened*, fasted, and did *teshuvah* in the building, while the Cossacks attacked and tried to breach the walls. Weakened by the fasting, the Taz passed out.

In his sleep, he heard a voice reading a *pasuk* from *Melachim* (*II* 19:34), **וְגַנּוֹתֵי אֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ לְמַעֲנִי וּלְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי** - *I will protect and save this city for My sake, and for the sake of My servant Dovid.* The Taz awoke and told the people they would be saved.

The historian Abraham Rechtman (1880–1972) records what happened next: *A miracle ensued: Suddenly the old and rusty cannons began to fire of their own accord. The murderous bands fled to the four winds, and the town of Alik was saved. In commemoration of the miracle that had occurred, the Taz composed special penitential prayers. The Jews of Alik had the custom of reciting them every year on the day that the miracle occurred, 26 Sivan.*

Only In Israel, by Rav Yissochor Frand

Parshas Shlach reminds us that whenever we speak about the Land of Israel, we must always say **הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבַרְנוּ בָהּ לָתוּר אֹתָהּ טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד "*The land is very very good*"**. [Bamidbar 14:7].

It is very easy to find fault. Unfortunately, there are always things about which it is easy to be critical. But we need to 'see the good in Jerusalem' [Tehillim 128:5]. We must always try to see the good and not speak ill of Eretz Yisrael. The following true story – which could only happen in Eretz Yisrael – speaks to the very special status of Eretz Yisrael and the very special mentality that could only exist in the holy land. I heard this story from Rav Aharon Feldman.

A grandfather came to visit Eretz Yisrael and took his little grandson out to eat in a Jerusalem restaurant. As their luck would have it, this was the same day that Bill Clinton (who was President of the United States at that time) was in Jerusalem.

On an unplanned stop, the Clinton entourage went into this very restaurant for a bite to eat. What better photo-op is there than to have President Clinton eating a bagel and lox sandwich in the holy

city of Jerusalem? The grandfather and grandson were sitting in the restaurant when suddenly, the Secret Service, the President of the United States, CNN, and the entire entourage walked into the restaurant. Bill Clinton ordered his bagel and lox and took a couple of bites which were duly recorded by the cameras. It was a real Kodak moment!

Clinton then noticed the grandfather and grandson in the restaurant. He approached the little Yerushalmi boy and said, "Hello. My name is Bill Clinton. What is your name?" The boy told the President his name, they had a brief conversation, and then Clinton and his entourage departed.

A few moments later, the grandfather asked his grandson, "Do you know that you just met the President of the United States?" To which the little boy responded, "Yes, but I still have never met **Rav Elyashiv** !"

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk - The Spies Who Loved Me

Much ado is made about the fact that the Parsha begins with the words, "Shlach lecha anashim, send men "for yourself."" Hashem didn't request the spies be sent. He had no need for spies because He told the Jews He would give them the land. If that's the case, then there's no need for discussion because any hurdles will be overcome. From Moshe's perspective, the Jews' request to send spies was merely a way for them to do their hishtadlus, their required effort, which is something Hashem wants us to do in general. We move through the world with a natural order but know that it isn't our efforts which make the difference, but Hashem's will.

Moshe didn't realize the Jews weren't on the level he thought they were. Moshe chose men he thought would be right for the job, but

only two out of the twelve withstood the test of this mission. It could be that Moshe chose incorrectly.



The Kli Yakar says an amazing thing. "Send men for yourself," said G-d, "because if it were up to me, I would send women."

Really? Women? Are they known for espionage? Why would Hashem have chosen women instead of men? He explains: The Midrash in Yalkut Shimoni tells us the men had a hatred for the Land of Israel, as they said, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt." The women, however, harboured a great love for the land, as they [the daughters of Tzelophchad] said, "Give us a portion in it."

Hashem therefore said, "I know the future and would send women who love the land, because they would not speak ill of it." The problem with the spies Moshe sent was that they couldn't see things through the eyes of love. To them, everything was an obstacle. Whatever they saw became a dealbreaker.

Had the spies loved Hashem and the land, they would have found a way to make it work. The only way to truly serve Hashem is to love Him, so nothing can ever stop you from trying to fulfil your duties and make Him happy and proud. When you love Hashem, the biggest obstacles fall away and if you can't find a way around, you find one under or through. That's what saved Yehoshua and Kalev, and that's the key to our salvation too.

"Don't be a fly, be a bee. Flies look for garbage; bees look for flowers and honey. Find the good in people." –Ben Ish Chai

The Tzitzis

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת - 15:38

Targum Onkelos translates tzitzis as – **פְּרוּסְפְּדִין**

Rav Avraham Genachovski Zt'l [1936-2012], was a highly-regarded Rosh Yeshiva, mashpiah, mashgiach and maggid shiur in Tchebin.



He was once on a crowded bus, when a woman came on and asked him if the vacant seat next to him was available. He wasn't too keen on having a female sit next to him when there were some other seats still available. He didn't want to embarrass her or make too big a fuss, so he simply said, "This seat **is** available, but you should know that I have got "krispedin" on my body!

She replied, "Oh, I see, that doesn't sound very good, if you have got "Krispedin", I wish you better, and I suppose that I should find somewhere else to sit!"

With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

After resolving a difficulty in **Rambam, R' Yisroel Salanter** fainted. "If I have such talent," R' Yisroel explained upon coming to, "I have a tremendous responsibility. - The Heavenly Court will demand of me, "Why didn't you get the whole world to do teshuvah?" **~ Sparks of Mussar.**

Why Cover the Head With a Tallis During Prayer? by Yehuda Shurpin

וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת עַל־כַּנְפֵי בִגְדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם 15:38

The prophet Amos proclaimed, "Prepare yourself to meet your G-d, O Israel." The rabbis explain this to mean that one should make preparations before praying, including preparing special garments, as if one were meeting an important dignitary.



Additionally, prayer nowadays takes the place of the offerings on the altar in the Holy Temple. Just as the priests who brought the offerings wore special uniforms, so should we pray in special clothing. This is one of the many reasons why we wear a *tallit* during prayer.

But why is there a widespread custom to specifically cover one's head with the *tallit* during (the morning) prayers? Yes, the *halachah* is to wrap oneself—including one's head—with the *tallit* while putting it on, but why is the custom to continue wearing it over the head for the duration of the prayers?

To add to the question, why is it that, in many Ashkenazic communities, only men who are married or who have been married cover their heads with a *tallit* while praying?

An Act of Humility

The basic reason for covering the head with the *tallit* is that it imparts an extra sense of humility that there is a G-d above, thus bringing about an awe of heaven.

Additionally, the Zohar says that one should cover his head, including the eyes, with a *tallit* during prayer so he doesn't look at the Shechinah. Some explain this to refer to obscuring your side vision, but not truly covering the actual eyes.

Two Coverings

Aside from the reasons mentioned above, many are careful to pray with two head coverings, such as a hat or *tallit* over their *kippah*.

As mentioned above, prayer nowadays is in the place of the services performed in the Holy Temple. In the Talmud, we find that the high priest actually wore two head coverings—a *kippah* and a turban—when serving in the Holy Temple. Accordingly, it is appropriate to mirror the high priest by wearing a hat (or *tallit*) over a *kippah*.

According to most opinions, the *tallit* is meant to be worn over the head for the duration of the prayers. Even those who aren't careful to do so for the entire prayers are careful to do so during the Shema and Amidah, as well as the communal responses such as Barechu and Kedushah.

Interestingly, although most Ashkenazic communities have the custom to wait until marriage to don a *tallit*. Those who do wear the *tallit* before marriage don't wear it over their head.

This is based on the Talmudic statement that it was not the custom for those who weren't married yet to wear a *sudra* (cloth) over their heads.

Many explain this to mean that in Talmudic times, unmarried men would not cover their heads with a *tallit*. Based on this, many Ashkenazim have the custom not to cover their heads with their *tallit* before marriage.

For a young, single man to wear a *tallit* over his head would thus be presumptuous, the opposite of the humility it is meant to achieve.

Rabbi Yaakov Rahimi - Scream Emuna

Dovid Hamelech writes in Tehillim (92:3), **לְהַגִּיד בַּבֹּקֶר חַסְדֶּךָ וֶאֱמוּנָתְךָ בַּלֵּילוֹת** "***Proclaim Hashem's kindness during the day, and Your faith in the nights***."

Why does Dovid Hamelech state that the time to speak of our faith in Hashem is specifically at night?

Night-time is when there is a lack of clarity. When darkness prevails, confusion exists, and you do not know how things will turn out. When does Hashem want us to proclaim our faith in Him? When we don't see Him. When we don't know what our fate will be and how our life will turn out, precisely then, Hashem asks that we place our faith in Him. Specifically then, when life is dark and difficult, we scream out to Hashem, "I believe in You, and You will take care of me." We daven, learn and fulfil Hashem's will even when everything is unclear. We know that there is a bigger picture and a bigger plan. And on that faith in Hashem, we lean everything that we have and everything that we are onto.

Rabbi Daniel Coren - Hidden Messages



I was once at the Kotel on a Shabbos morning, and as I approached the shtender and siddur, I noticed that it was dirtied with bird droppings. Upon seeing this, I cleaned it up and went to wash my hands. But when I returned, it wasn't over. Again, the bird droppings dirtied the shtender. This happened three times.

Reflecting on this, I wondered what the message was. I then remembered something I had heard from **R' Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi shlita**. The Gemara says that when Yonasan ben Uziel would learn Torah, any bird that flew above would

be singed by fire. We do not merit to have the birds be burned up in a fire, said R' Ezrachi. But at the very least, we get them to tremble and shake. And when that happens, the result is bird droppings.

Anytime there are so-called droppings in our life, it's Hashem telling us that He loves us. One day we will merit having fire emanating from our davening and learning. So many times in life we think that the difficulties and messiness in life are so bad, but embedded in it, is a hidden message of love from Hashem.

Fascinating Insights by Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Visceral Voice

The gemara Taanis 21a says that Nachum Ish Gam Zu was called so because whatever would happen to him, even a seeming misfortune, he would say **גם זו לטובה** , this too is for the best. If this is so, then why was his name Nachum Ish Gam Zu and not Nachum Ish Gam Zu L'tova?

Moshe changed Yehoshua's name from **הושע** to **יהושע**.

R' Shamshon Rafael Hirsch comments that the change of name bears an implied message to him and also to his companions as each time they addressed him by his new name they, too, were to remember the message implied by this name and in carrying out their mission they were not to lose sight of this message.

This name indicates to him and to them that **הושע** is **יהושע**: He who saved us in the past (**הושע** is past tense) will also save us in the future (**יהושע** is in the future tense).

With this we can answer the question we began with. Nachum Ish Gam Zu was called so in order to put an emphasis on **גם זו**. That is to say, just like in the past Hashem was with you and you saw it was for the good, so too He will be with you in the future.

In Hebrew when a person asks, "How are you?," the response is "*b'seder*, okay; alright." Someone once noted that the word *b'seder* which literally means "in order" can be interpreted to mean that you are saying, "Whatever is going on in my life is in order and all part of the master plan."

Rabbi Elimeilech Biderman – A Golden Dinar for Every Bucket

The Chofetz Chaim brings a powerful chazal from Toras HaBayis (perek 13) that offfers great chizuk.



Chazal bring a *mashal* of a minister who ordered someone to fill his buckets with water, and told him, "For every bucket you fill, you will get a golden dinar."

The fellow started filling a bucket but noticed that there was a crack in the bottom, and all the water was leaking out, so he stopped filling the bucket.

A wise person standing there, asked him, "Why have you stopped filling the bucket?"

The man responded, "What's the point in filling it up, when all the water is leaking out?"

"But what difference does it make to you?" the wise person countered. "You will still receive the reward for every bucket that you fill, whether it's leaking or not! Every single bucket that you fill, will get you a golden dinar."

"And futhermore – listen well – the minister himself knows that the buckets leak! He only wants you to fill them, so that he can reward you."

So too, Hashem is well aware that a person has faults. He knows that a person has challenges. But, every time a person stays strong, learns, davens and has Yiras and Ahavas Hashem – you will be rewarded! – It doesn't matter that you have flaws!

Hashem knows we have faults, but nevertheless wishes to reward us for every single good deed.

Why do the cracks even bother you? Why do you pay attention to them? The minister – Hashem, is also aware of your shortcomings!

Next Level Chesed – Rabbi Paysach Krohn



Many years ago, there was a wonderful person who was the head of Agudas Yisrael in America. His name was **Mike (Elimelech) Tress Zt'l**. He happened to be my uncle.

One day, his son – Zvi Tress tells me: "I was *davening* in the Kerestirer *vosikin minyan* in Miami a few years ago when an elderly man walked over to me. Having seen my name on my *tallis battel*, he asked me in Yiddish, 'Are you related to Meilich Tress?' When I responded that he was my father, the Satmar chosid just stood there, and started crying!

I asked him, "why are you crying – did you know my father?"

With tears in his eyes he said, "Let me tell you a story..."

'I was a Satmar *yungerman* living in Williamsburg,' he began. 'I lost my job because I refused to work on *Shabbos*, and I was in a bad

situation. I didn't have money to support my family. Someone suggested that I go see Mike Tress in the Agudah office and he will help me.

Being affiliated with Satmar, at first, I refused to go to the Agudah, and I definitely won't go speak to any 'Mike'! But after a few weeks, there was literally no money and I had nothing to feed my family, so I went to your father.

When I entered his office, he looked at me and said, 'How can I help you?' I told him of my situation. He asked me what I do, and I told him that I am a glazier. He immediately took a piece of paper and wrote something on it.

'I happen to know someone who is looking for a glazier!' he exclaimed. 'Take this paper to this address. Bring it to the owner of this company. He has a job for you.'

I was taken aback by his immediate response, but I followed directions. True to his word, that person gave me a job on the spot, and I was paid later that week. It was amazing. All of a sudden, my *matzav* changed. There was food in the house and there was food for *Shabbos*, and my family was functioning again.'

"The man pauses and tells me, 'But the story isn't over. About two months later, my boss gives me my pay cheque and tells me, 'Go tell Mike Tress that he doesn't have to pay your check anymore. You are a good worker, and I will start paying you myself!'

The man's hands were trembling as he finished his story, and I could see his feelings of *hakoras hatov* were still there as he finished.

"Can you imagine what kind of presence of mind my father had to have? He had to make a quick *cheshbon* how to help this *Yid* in a *bakavodike* way, in a moment, without him realizing. Only one who truly cares about fellow *Yidden* would have the presence of mind to do that.

Remembering Mike – by Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetsky



It is difficult to put into words the story of a young American Jew who gave up his business and his everyday living in order to save the physical lives of those who cheated death at the hands of the Nazis and the spiritual lives of those who came to the land of opportunity, ready to throw away their entire past and embrace a foreign future.

Elimelech Gavriel (Mike) Tress was an American-born businessman, a partner in a highly profitable company, whose life was changed when he met **Rav Elchonon Wasserman** during the latter's trip to America. He threw himself into the effort to save *Yidden* in Europe, using all his connections in the business and government worlds. He was the right-hand man of the *gedolei hador* in America and one of the founders of Agudas Yisroel of America.

Those who are old enough to remember him recall how he was instrumental in changing the landscape of America by helping *Yidden* in myriad ways. He was a father and a brother to countless Holocaust survivors who came to a new country with just the shirts on their backs.

He set up a shelter in the Agudah office on Bedford Avenue and extended his hospitality to his home, where the door was open for anyone, anytime. If you were a *Yid* and you needed help, he rolled up his sleeves and did what he could. From obtaining visas, to securing lifesaving medicine available only from the US Army, to buying a specific shirt size for a needy child, he helped *yochid* after *yochid*.

He did not seek honor for his work, nor did he take compensation. He had a mission to help *Yidden* and he did just that.

Due to a heart condition, Mike had no choice but to slow down his lifesaving work when he was only in his late 40s, and he eventually passed away at the young age of 56. But the impact that he made on *Klal Yisroel* only grew stronger after his *petirah*.

Hundreds of families have been established, tens of mosdos of chinuch were up and running, the Agudah was effective, and Torah was being taught by talmidim of American yeshivos to the next dor of yeshiva bochurim. His superhuman efforts paved the way for the next generation of Yiddishkeit to flourish on these shores.

The younger generation learned more about his amazing life only years later, with the publication of the classic "*They Called Him Mike*" by Yonasan Rosenblum (ArtScroll, 1995). But his life's work continues with the next generations, as his *askanus* "gene" was passed on to his children and grandchildren, who are emulating their patriarch, following in his ways of helping the *klal.*

As we approach his 51st *yahrtzeit*, I spoke to his three sons, R' Shmuel Boruch, R' Zvi and R' Mendel (a fourth son, R' Avrohom Gershon, was *niftar* in 1984), who recalled the selfless life of their father and some memories of growing up in the home of a giant in *chesed*.

R' Shmuel Boruch: "We grew up without a phone. My father didn't want anyone to call him for help and hear, 'We're sorry, Mr. Tress is not available.' The words 'not available' did not exist for him. He was always ready to help anyone. He wanted people to feel free to come into our house and ask for help, which they did. My father was always very busy with helping others and his work in the Agudah.

"When he was home and available, he was always there for his wife and children. I remember that at the Friday night *Shabbos seudos*, he would always be the one to set up, serve, and clear off the table.

He knew that my mother worked so hard during the week raising the family while he was out of the house for most of the day, and he wanted my mother to relax during the *seudos*. In the Tress *mishpacha*, it became somewhat of a '*minhag*' that the men serve at the Friday night *seudah*.

"Even after all these years, my wife and I marvel how many people we meet who have such a feeling of *hakoras hatov* to my father. When I was recently in Florida, a man saw my *tallis* and approached me. '*Di bist ah zeen fun Meilich Tress?* Are you a son of Meilich Tress?' When I told him that I am, he started to hug and kiss me, with tears filling his eyes. He said that he was a survivor, and a relative of his brought him over from Europe to New York to live with him, promising to take care of him. He arrived in Ellis Island and eventually went to the East Side, where he lived with this relative.

After two months, his relative apologized and told him that it was simply too hard for him to continue supporting him. He had a family of his own and was not making a lot of money. Now, he found himself without a roof over his head.

People told him to go to speak to Mike Tress. He walked across the Williamsburg Bridge and went to the Agudah office at 616 Bedford Avenue. He asked the first man who he saw, 'Can I speak to Mike Tress?'

My father answered with his usual, 'How can I help you?' He set him up with a room in the Agudah office, which also served as a shelter for anyone who needed a place to live. He found him a job, a *shidduch*, and an apartment. Even after he got married, my father insisted that he come over for *seudos*.

"My father would help every *Yid* who needed help, whether he was affiliated with the Agudah or not, whether he was *chassidish* or *litvish*, religious or not.

"We lived across the street from the **Satmar Rov**, and my father arranged for him something unique. In order to gain citizenship, you had to appear before a judge. My father, with his government connections, was able to arrange for the judge to come to the Satmar Rov in his house, so that he would not have to go to court.

"While he was the CEO of Lampert Brothers Textiles, he used his position to do *chesed* for others. A woman named Mrs. Eisenbach once met him in Williamsburg and tearfully told him that her brother's *chinuch* was at risk. Her parents were unable to work, so she was working to pay tuition for her brother. She lost her job and could no longer afford tuition.

My father immediately told her that she has a job at Lampert and she should come on Sunday and start. She came in on Sunday to a room full of people working and looked a little lost.

The manager walked over to her and asked her what she is doing there. 'Mr. Tress told me that I have a job,' she replied.

'I don't know what he was talking about!' the manager retorted. 'There no room here for you to work!'

Just then, my father came into the room, *shlepping* a desk-chair, and he placed it in a corner. 'Here is your desk,' he told her. 'You can work here!' Her brother's tuition was paid, and he ended up becoming a big *marbitz Torah*.

"One of my sisters asked him if he had *charatah* over walking away from Esquire shoe polish company after his partner refused to close it on *Shabbos*. '*Charatah*?' he asked rhetorically, 'There was no thought in my mind to stay with a *mechallel Shabbos*! Once I made that decision, I never thought about it again!'

"My father gave up everything to save *Klal Yisroel*. When Rav Elchonon gave him his *shlichus*, he believed him and accepted his mission. When Rav Elchonon was leaving, a group of American *bochurim* went to the port and tried to block him from

getting on the boat. They all, including Rav Elchonon, knew that he was returning to Europe, into the *kivshan ha'eish*. Rav Elchonon told my father that the future of *Klal Yisroel* in America now rests on his shoulders. My father accepted the responsibility.

"In the 1940s and 1950s, he felt the extreme necessity to create Pirchei and Bnos Agudas Yisroel, along with Camp Agudah and Camp Bnos. His goal was to create a *Torahdike* place for the American public school-attending youth to assemble and be introduced to *bnei* and *bnos Torah* who were their mentors and counselors.

Many children switched into *yeshivos* and *Bais Yaakovs* after their camp experience, having been exposed to true Torah values and *hashkafah*. His devotion and concern were so sincere that ultimately the bank used his personal collateral as payment for the mortgage for Camp Agudah after the Agudah did not have the funds to pay. This was something he was always proud of.

"He never spoke about what he did. He didn't feel that he had to. When someone went to him, he responded, "How can I help you?' He never felt the need to say how he helped people in the past. It was irrelevant. He helped out so many *yechidim*."

R' Tzvi: "It is hard for me to give you exact personal reflections, as I was young at the time of my father's *petirah*. He slowed down his *askanus* in the years preceding his *petirah* as well due to his heart condition. I will tell you some of what I have heard over the years, but the perception we have of him was something that we started to understand more over time. The stories and insights we heard about him over the last 50 years fit in exactly with what we saw and it all came together.

"While my father was alive, I never realized how great he was or how much he did for *Klal Yisroel*. Yes, whenever he walked in the street, people always stopped him to talk to him. Yes, there was a constant stream of people coming over to the house. But how did I know that my friend's fathers were not the same way?

Many *gedolim* would frequent our house as well. When he made *simchos* in our house, I remember **Rav Aharon [Kotler], Rav Yaakov [Kamenetsky], Rav Moshe [Feinstein], Rav Leizer Silver, the Kapytshnitzer Rebbe, the Boyaner Rebbe, the Bluzhever Rebbe**, and many *gedolim* coming over, but I never suspected that my father was different than any other man. My father never came home and spoke about what he did. Yes, he was busy, but when he came home, he acted like a regular father.

"Something amazing about my father is that 50 years later, people still talk about him with tears in their eyes. The name 'Mike Tress' ignites certain memories that people still talk about him and his amazing way of helping people even after all these years.

There were many *askanim* over the last century who did great things for the *klal*, yet they are spoken about by a few relatives and maybe mentioned a few times. But Mike Tress is someone who is still spoken about and a name that conjures up so many memories even after all these years. It's simply amazing.

"There is a woman in Toronto who used to talk to me about my father. She had a beautiful family with children and grandchildren who are *bnei Torah* and *talmidei chachomim*.

A few years ago, I received a phone call from her children, who said that she was in the hospital. They insisted that I come down to see her. She was very sick and nearing the end of her life.

When I entered her hospital room, she asked her children to leave and only I remained in the room. She began telling me her story…

She was a young adult from Detroit and decided that she was going to pursue a career in journalism. She enrolled in a school in New York and arranged for an apartment to live in. Since typewriters were very expensive and she was not able to afford one, she knew that she would have no choice but to use the typewriters available to the

public in the local library. However, the only day possible to use the library typewriters was *Shabbos*.

She accepted her new reality that she would be *mechallel Shabbos*. After all, this was the only way she could pursue her career. Before she left, she stopped by someone in Detroit to say goodbye. He told her that he has a good friend, Mike Tress, who works in the Agudah office, and if she ever needs anything, she should stop by his office.

When she arrived in New York, she settled into her apartment and stopped by to meet my father. As my father was speaking to her, she mentioned that she won't be keeping *Shabbos* anymore.

My father was aghast. 'Why can't you keep *Shabbos*?' he asked her. She explained to him that the only day possible for her to type was on *Shabbos*, and since she did not own a typewriter, she would type in the library on *Shabbos*.

My father looked at her and pointed to the bulky, heavy typewriter sitting on his desk. 'You need a typewriter? Why should you be *mechalel Shabbos*? We have an extra typewriter right here in the Agudah office!' He got up and carried the bulky, heavy metal typewriter down the stairs and a few blocks to her apartment!

"Without a question, there was no other typewriter in the Agudah office and he gave away the last typewriter.

'I am only *shomer Shabbos* today because of your father,' she finished with tears in her eyes. The next day, she was *niftar*.

"I once called **Rav Moshe Aharon Stern** to ask him for a favour for a family member. He told me that the least he can do is a favour for a son of Mike Tress.

When he was a *bochur* learning in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas, he wanted a visa to go to Eretz Yisroel. At the time, there was a very limited number of visas given out by the English, but my father told him, 'If you promise me that you will make a difference to *Klal Yisroel*, I will get you a visa.'

His move to Kamenitz Yeshiva was only possible with the help of my father.

He also told me that he was in the Agudah office in 1943 when many *askanim* were working tirelessly to try to gain the release of **Rav Menachem Ziemba** from the Warsaw Ghetto. When they heard the tragic news of the murder of Rav Zeimba, everyone let out a big *krechtz*. But my father fainted on the spot!

"I met a *Yid* in Eretz Yisroel who told me that when my father came to visit the survivors following liberation, he arrived with a few pairs of *tefillin*, and when they were already given out, he gave away his own! He literally gave the shirt off his back to the survivors.

When he was leaving back to America, they noticed that his army uniform was buttoned up all the way to the top, and he was wearing shoes without socks. He had given away his shirt and his socks!

"We knew of his greatness, but we didn't realize until later on how great he was. He excelled in helping individuals, but on a huge scale. 50 years later, we are still talking about his lifesaving and unbelievably selfless work for *Klal Yisroel*."

R' Mendel: "I was only 9 years old when he was *niftar*, so I can only tell you what I hear from others. But I have met many people who told me such amazing things about my father.

"Two years ago, when I was in Miami, I was *davening* in the Carriage club, when a *Yid* approached me. He asked me if I was related to Mike Tress, and when I responded that he was my father, he started to hug and kiss me. He had tears in his eyes and said, 'I was in the Felderfing DP camp when your father came. He walked in and hugged us.

We immediately could tell that he was not just there as a formality, as a Jew from some federation, but he really cared about us. He didn't go back and sleep in a hotel but slept on the same piece of wood as me in the camp.

He became like a father to each and every one of us and promised us that he would do his utmost to bring us all to America. He lived up to that promise and made sure that I arrived in America. He set me up with a job. He set me up with a place to live, and he gave me money to get married. I owe my entire life to your father!'

"My *bar mitzvah* was held in the *shul* of your *elter zaide*, **Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky**, in Monsey. My father was no longer alive, and my mother arranged the *Kiddush*, catered by Mr. Apeldorfer, the cook in Bais Medrash Elyon. After *Shabbos*, my mother sat down with him to make a *cheshbon* of how much she owed for the *Shabbos*. When she finished and was about to pay, he told her, 'I can't take money from you.'

He related the following story: 'When I was in the DP camps, your husband came, and he was giving out *tefillin*. He brought along about eight pairs from America and was distributing them to the survivors. When it came my turn, there were no *tefillin* left.

Realizing that I wanted a pair also, he then took his own *tefillin* and said, 'There are still more,' and he handed them to me. I never paid him for those *tefillin*, and this *bar mitzvah* was a payment for those *tefillin*.

"My father lived with the belief that every *Yid's* problem was also his problem. **Rabbi Moshe Sherer** once noted that my father died young because he carried the entire *Klal Yisroel's* problems on his heart. Everyone's *tzaros* were his *tzaros*.

"He was the COE of a big textile company, Lampert Brothers, and a wealthy man. With his position, he was able to secure many jobs for many girls without them having any problems with working on *Shabbos*.

Later on, he was a partner in the Esquire Shoe Polish Company, which was later sold to Revlon for millions of dollars, but he left the company after his partner refused to close on *Shabbos*.

At that time, Rav Elchonon Wasserman was in America, and he told my father that he wants to make a deal with him with a *kinyan chalipin*. 'If you give up your businesses for *Klal Yisroel*, and work to ensure that *Yiddishkeit* can survive and thrive in America, I guarantee you that all of your children and *ainiklach* will be *shomer Torah umitzvos*.'

My father accepted. He sold everything and spent the rest of his life working tirelessly on behalf of the *klal*. When Rav Elchonon left back to Europe, my father accompanied him to the dock, and Rav Elchonon told him, 'I am leaving *Yiddishkeit* in America with you as a *pikadon*. Make sure to take care of it!'

"He always kept a picture of Rav Elchonon with him in America, remembering his promise. He literally gave away all his money for his fellow *Yidden*. He re-mortgaged his house three times in order to survive.

When Camp Agudah bought its campus in the Catskills, the bank wanted collateral. He already gave everything away, and the only thing he had left was his life insurance policy. The bank accepted that as collateral. Later on, the Agudah was not able to make the payments on the campus and the bank took his life insurance policy. He was *niftar* with an empty bank account. There was literally no money in the house. My mother had to go out to work as soon as he died just to make sure that there was food to eat.

"He instilled in us the care that you must have for another *Yid*. Our *Shabbos seudah* was always open to whoever wanted to come. All types came to eat with us.

I remember once that a man who was not refined at all came to eat with us. He was eating quite repulsively, spitting half his food back onto his plate. I was quite disturbed, and I made a face. My father looked at me and motioned for me to leave the room. Later he reprimanded me, 'Do you know who this *Yid* is? Do you know what he went through? How can you make a face at him?' It was a lesson

that remained with me my whole life. My father taught us how to care about every single *Yid*.

"We still don't know how it was possible for him to accomplish so much in his short years. But he put his whole life into saving *Klal Yisroel* at that time, and he helped out so many *yechidim* that his *chesed* is still resonating loudly 51 years later." *Yehi zichro boruch.*

Reaching Higher

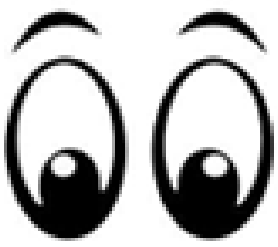
A talmid of **R' Noach Weinberg z"l**, founder of Aish HaTorah, recounted how one evening, R' Noach invited him home to help put up his sukkah and have dinner.

When they got there, R' Noach's seven-year-old son was trying to climb a pipe in the corner of the living room. The boy was about six feet off the ground and not getting any higher.

Knowing what would happen in his home, the student braced himself as R' Noach approached the boy, sure the child would get in trouble. But he was in for a surprise.

R' Noach got right next to his son, bent over a bit and said, "***Stand on my shoulders and I'll help you reach the ceiling***."

That's how R' Noach treated every Jew, and that's why he was a giant in Kiruv. He didn't scold; he humbled himself and helped everyone reach higher.



Open Eyes

"Faith does not mean closing your eyes. Faith means opening them wider." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l.

Parshah Pearls (Adapted from the Ba'al ha'Turim)

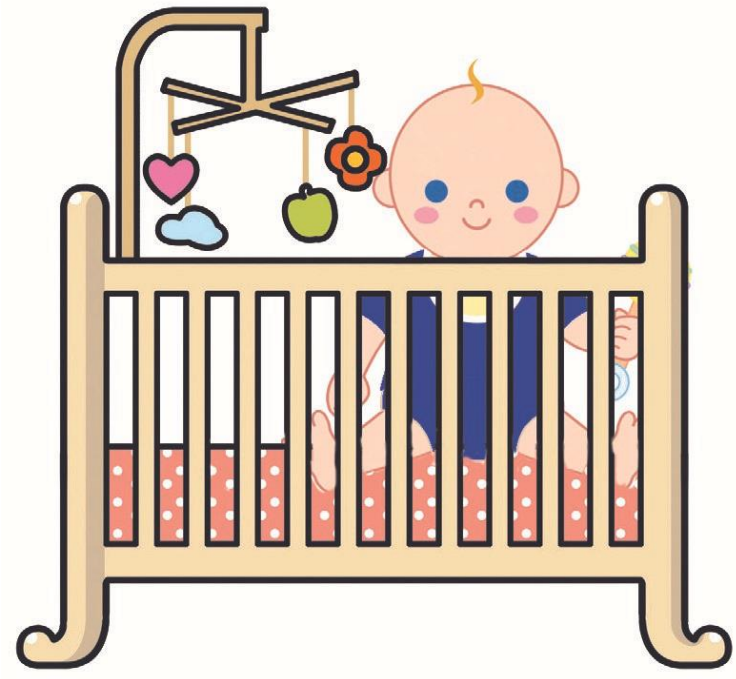
More About Tzitzis

"Tzitzis" is the equivalent gematriya of 'Tzedokos' and 'Neshorim', because someone who is careful to fulfill the Mitzvah of Tzitzis, will merit to see the Shechinah, about which the Pasuk writes "And I will see Your Face with Tzedek". And he will also merit what the Pasuk writes "vo'eso eschem al kanfei neshorim" (and I will carry you on eagle's wings).

And You Shall See Them

וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ (15:39). This has the equivalent numerical value as 'Tzitzis ba'yom' (Tzitzis only applies in the day).

Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick



The פָּסוּק says, **רֵאשִׁית עֲרִסֹתֵיכֶם חַלָּה** - ***from the dough that you bake you should separate challah***. (15:20) The word **עֲרִסֹתֵיכֶם** can also mean 'your cradles', which refers to young children who are still in their cribs, and the word **חַלָּה** refers to the three mitzvos one is obligated to do with their young children.

ח stands for bris milah which is done on the eighth day, **ל** stands for pidyon haben which is done for his first born son when he is thirty days old, and **ה** stands for that one should begin to teach his son chumash when he is five years old. [**ספר דברי אברהם**]



I Mean Business!

R' Shimshon Pincus once said a **משל** as follows: Imagine you knew a person who constantly kept his eyes open for good business deals and in one transaction could make a few hundred thousand dollars. Would you not call this person a good businessman? After he does it a few times, most people would.

The same applies when it comes to **מצות**; a person has to be a good businessman. What does this mean?

For example: A light bulb once went out in the entrance way of a building in Ofakim - until the **ועד הבית** would take care of it… So what did Rav Pincus do? He went to the hardware store, bought a lightbulb for a few shekels, and screwed it in.

In one 'business deal' he gained hundreds of **מצות** for helping all of the people who benefitted from that light (the man who did not trip…).

This is the meaning of a person having to be a good businessman in Yiddishkeit.

I once heard from Reb Shimshon Pincus on a tape "There is one person who I am jealous of in **בני ברק**. Everyone knows of the tremendous heat in **בני ברק** and there is a person who did an amazing chessed. On one of the busy streets he installed a free water fountain for people to drink from"

Reb Shimshon Pincus said, "This person I am jealous of."

In this week's Parsha we have the parsha of Tzitzis where Rav Pincus expounds on this idea. Rav Pincus says that Tzitzis is the perfect example of an easy mitzvah with tremendous profits. Tzitzis is not expensive like tefillin or even an esrog and it is a Mitvah that as long as one is wearing the tzitzis one is being mekayem a Mitvah that the gemara **נדרים כה** says is **כל המצות שקולה כנגד שבתורה** !

The Yetzer Hara knows this and therefore, he can make a person feel lax about it. However, one who knows the value will fulfil this mitzvah in the best way. Rav Pincus points out that even one who wears tzitzis has to be careful to make sure he knows that his tzitzis still remain kosher up to date! Otherwise he may even be being over wearing a four cornered begged without tzitzis Chas V'Shalom.

What if tzitzis is not your Mitzvah because you are a woman, so there are plenty of other ways to cash in on Mitzvos. For example, woman were given 9 kavin of speech to pray and pray. So a woman who just by taking out a Tehilim and davening for the entire Jewish nation is cashing in big-time.

HaRav Zilberstein Cried: "HaRav Elyashiv Was Dumbfounded By The Rosh Yeshiva, Z'tl"

In a moving hesped delivered by HaGaon HaRav Yitzchak Zilberstein for the Rosh Yeshivah, z'tl, the Rav said in a tear-choked voice: "Maran, z'tl, was the greatest of the giants. His midos were astounding and his hasmadah and his love for Torah were boundless. His most prominent midos were emes and anavah."

"He never got angry. I've never seen anyone like this, who never got angry, 100 years and he never got angry. He never insulted anyone. Recently there was someone who deeply insulted him. The Rosh Yeshivah's first instruction was not to chalilah talk about him – the Rosh Yeshivah, z'tl was a human being that was half a malach."

HaRav Zilberstein then related a story: "The Rosh Yeshivah, z'tl kept his mother-in-law at home [Rebbetzin Diskind, a'h] when she was ill. The doctor came to me and told me: 'HaRav Edelstein's home is like a hospital – everything is for his mother-in-law – everything, it's a miniature hospital. I went to find him, I went into the kitchen. I saw him sitting there by his shtender, holding papers and writing. What was he writing? A shiur for Yeshivas Ponevezh. How does someone obtain such kochos? He didn't have an apartment, it was a hospital for his shviger. And he's sitting in the corner writing chiddushei Torah.'"

HaRav Zilberstein, who is the son-in-law of HaGaon HaRav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, z'tl, added: "We're connected by marriage, my grandson with his granddaughter. HaRav Elyashiv, z'tl, told me awesome things about the Rosh Yeshivah, z'tl, what a lofty madreigah he was on. HaRav Elyashiv, z'tl, who could see things – he was kodesh Elokim – was dumbfounded by him. Chaval – a person like this protects the generation. We need a lot of rachamim, they're preparing there [in Iran] – already three atomic bombs…we need a lot of rachamim. The only thing we can do is cry and plead to HaKadosh Baruch Hu."

He concluded by asking why we say a bracha on the Torah only when we learn it but for Gedolei Yisrael, we say a bracha merely by seeing them. He explained the answer according to the Gemara, Masechtas Moed Katan, that Rashbi told his son, Rebbi Elazar – to get a bracha from 'people of form' – **זיל גביהון דליברכוך**. There are several perushim about what '**אנשים של צורה**' means. One perush says that just like when coins are made, they take pieces of metal and stamp a shape on it, so there are people who engrave and stamp a shape on those around them."

"And therefore, just seeing such a person who is a 'person of form' requires a bracha because just looking at him instils yiras Shamayim and anavah."

HaRav Zilberstein concluded: "This is what we cry for, this is what we lost and what's missing. The Rosh Yeshivah, z'tl, engraved in his form and minted a coin of Torah and yiras Shamayim and anavah on all who saw him. Now a vacuum has been created of anavah and respect for others for he never once scoffed at anyone. We all must fill this vacuum." *(YWN Israel Desk – Jerusalem)*

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

What Did the Meraglim do Wrong?



Rashi says that this parsha is juxtaposed to the incident with Miriam. They saw that Miriam spoke badly against Moshe Rabeinu, and that she got punished, - **לָמָּה נִסְמְכָה פָּרָשַׁת מְרַגְּלִים לְפָרָשַׁת מִרְיָם? לְפִי שֶׁלָּקְתָה עַל עִסְקֵי דִבָּה, שֶׁדִּבְּרָה בְּאָחִיהָ, וּרְשָׁעִים הַלָּלוּ רָאוּ וְלֹא לָקְחוּ מוּסָר** - *Why is the section dealing with the spies juxtaposed with the section dealing with Miriam? Because she was punished over matters of slander, for speaking against her brother, and these wicked people witnessed [it], but did not learn their lesson. — [Midrash Tanchuma Shelach 5]*

It says (13:25) **וַיָּשֻׁבוּ מִתּוּר הָאָרֶץ מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם** - *They returned from scouting the Land at the end of forty days.*

Rashi points out that the journey should have taken them at least double the time. '*But does not the Land measure four hundred parasangs by four hundred parasangs [a parasang is equivalent to about three-and-a-half miles in length], and an average person's daily*

traveling distance is ten parasangs? Thus, it takes forty days to walk from east to west, and they traversed its length and its breadth?

However, since it was revealed before the Holy One, blessed is He, that He would sentence them with a year for every day, he shortened the way [so they covered ground more rapidly]. — [Mid. Tanchuma 8]

So what did the meraglim do wrong? They spoke lashon harah.

When? When they returned.

So why is Hashem shortening the travel time now, when the aveirah only took place later? What has their Aveiro of speaking lashon horah about the land got to do with the amount of time that they spent in Eretz Yisrael?

Reb Chaim Shmulevitch says that from here you see that the *issur* of lashon Harah – as serious as it is, was not the root cause of the aveirah, it was something else.

The root cause of the aveira was their outlook (the wrong perception) of the situation. Because they judged the land unfavourably – this led to them speaking lashon horah.

So, the actual punished was because of what the saw in Eretz Yisrael, and not as much because of the lashon harah that they later spoke. The 40 years in the *midbar* corresponded to the 40 days of seeing evil. This is why Hashem reduced the time, so the punishment would be halved!

The Power to Change

"The greatest obstacle to change is the belief that you cannot change." ~ Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski zt"l.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה יִפְּלוּ פִגְרֵיכֶם וְכָל־פְּקֻדֵיכֶם לְכָל־מִסְפַּרְכֶם מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וָמָעְלָה אֲשֶׁר הֲלִינֹתֶם עָלָי *In this desert, your corpses shall fall; your entire number, all those from the age of twenty and up, who were counted, because you complained against Me.* (14:29)

The Medrash Eicha that is quoted in Tosfos and the Rashbam (Bava Basra 121a): 'Rav Levi says that on the day preceding Tisha b'Av, a Bas Kol was heard throughout the camp saying, "Go forth and dig!" Everyone would go out and dig graves and sleep in them on the night of Tisha b'Av. In the morning, a Bas Kol would announce: "Arise, and separate the dead from the living!" They would discover approximately 15,000 missing (deceased) of the initial 600,000.'



This scenario continually recurred, year after year, for 40 years, until the entire generation was decimated. Thus, the punishment for the sin of the Meraglim took place for only forty days - but those 40 days took 40 years to complete! [This is the meaning of **יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה** - one day a year (Tisha B'Av) for the forty days they spoke Lashon Hara.]

On the very last year of this gezeirah, as before, they all dug their own graves and lay down in them. In the morning, they made a count, and miraculously, no one had died that night!

They thought, maybe they had miscalculated the Chodesh, so the next night they repeated the exercise, but the same thing happened. They repeated this until the middle of the month,at which point, it dawned on them that the gezeira had been nullified.

Why were these people *zoche* to remain alive that year?

Every year there was a serious Yom Tefilla before they lay down in their graves, in order that they should be of the ones who remained alive. However, on that last year, there were only 15,000 men left – they knew with certainty that their time had come. Not left with any other choice, they davened with 100% true Emunah and Bitachon to Hashem.

These tefillos were very powerful and were answered.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

וּלְקַחְתֶּם מִפְּרִי הָאָרֶץ וְהַיָּמִים יְמֵי בִּכּוּרֵי עֲנָבִים ***It was the season when the first grapes begin to ripen.***13:20



The Rashbam and the **Seforno** tell us the reason why the Torah tells us this information, but the **Kli Yakar** says it was because Klal Yisrael are compared to grapes - **כַּעֲנָבִים בַּמִּדְבָּר מָצָאתִי יִשְׂרָאֵל** *'Like grapes in the desert I found Israel.'* Hosheah 9:10

They are compared to grapes here, because it had become the ripe time for Klal Yisrael to enter into Eretz Yisrael.

The Chida brings **Rav Shamshon Ostropoli** , who says that **בִּכּוּרֵי** means the 'first- precedent.'

The letters that precede **ענבם** are **סמא-ל-** (destructive angel).

The B'nei Yisaschar says that these days of the meraglim were from chodesh Tammuz through to Tisha B'Av when this angel is most powerful. He came just now at this special time to impede Klal Yisrael's entry into Eretz Yisrael.

Actually, the mitzvah of Bikurim was to atone for the fact that we sent meraglim in the first place. We have to be *makir tov* to atone for the spies inability to see the good in the fruits of Eretz Yisrael. (The same 3 fruits)



Joy – Under All Circumstances

The Chazon Ish zt'l said, "***It is impossible to pass through this world without troubles. The difference between people is how they accept them. Some people pass through the world laughing, and some pass through the world crying. It is better to pass through the world with laughter***."



In other words, to focus on the "half-cup that is full."

Of course, there is always something lacking, something to mope about. But you can focus on the good; if you do that, you will live a happy life.

A chasan breaks an empty glass at his chuppah. This reminds him that from now on, he shouldn't think about what is empty and lacking. He should only focus on what is full. This is good advice for Shalom bayis, as well as for all matters of life. Focus on the good in your life; you will be happy, and everything will become good.

It is also possible to be happy for no reason at all. One can put all his worries aside and be happy.

When the Yidden heard the Meraglim's report about the strength of the nations living in Eretz Canaan, it states (14:1) **וַתִּשָּׂאְ כָּל־הָעֵדָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ הָעָם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא**, "*The entire community raised their voices and shouted, and the people wept on that night*."

Chazal (Taanis 29) says, "That night was Tisha b'Av. Hakadosh Baruch Hu told them, 'You cried for no reason (**בכיה של חנם**), I will establish this day for crying for generations"'.

The Imrei Emes zt'l noted that if crying for no reason resulted in crying for generations, when one is happy for no reason - **שמחה של חנם** , that will result in joy for salvation. Laugh and be happy, even if you think you have no reason to be happy. This will result in many reasons to be happy.

The Holy Rizhiner zt'l once heard his daughter *krechtz*. He told her, "Don't moan because one krechtz brings on the next one, and one joy and praise to Hashem brings more happiness and goodness."

This was the error of the Jewish nation when they moaned and cried when they heard the meraglim's report.

Crying and moaning bring on more sorrow, while joy results in Hashem's salvation.

And there is always a reason to be happy. There is always the half-cup that is full, which we should focus on.

"Emunah is the anchor of the soul. It keeps us grounded amidst the storms of life, reminding us that Hashem's love and guidance are constant." – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Be Content with Your Level of Ruchniyos

It states in Pirkei Avos (**4:1) אזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו** - "Who is wealthy? He who is happy with his portion."

The Sfas Emes zt'l notes that this also refers to your portion of ruchniyos. Even for ruchniyos, one should focus on the half-full cup. You indeed wanted to learn more Gemara, to daven with more kavanah, etc., but think about what you already did accomplish and rejoice with it. Compare yourself to lower achievers than you, and you will be happy with your accomplishments.



A fly was buzzing around the Shabbos tish of the **Beis Yisrael of Gur zt'l**, bothering the gathered people. One person was particularly agitated, and when it landed on the table before him, he slammed his hand down and crushed the fly. The bang on the table was loud, and it caught everyone's attention. Everyone looked up at him, including the Rebbe. The man was very embarrassed and distraught. He realized he was just mechalel Shabbos in public!

But suddenly, to the man's relief, the fly, which everyone thought was dead, came back to life and began flying again.

The Beis Yisrael commented, "Chazal say the yetzer hara is like a fly. Sometimes, we think we have killed the yetzer hara, but then it raises its ugly head and returns to life."

Indeed, sometimes we think we have conquered a certain yetzer hara, and it won't bother us again. But the yetzer hara is still there; only it is dormant. It can come back to life anytime, so we must always be on guard.

We can also learn a different lesson from this story. Some people think that due to their aveiros, they have destroyed their neshamah,

and there isn't any good left in them. It isn't so. Their neshamah is very much alive, and deep down, it still yearns for ruchniyos. Perhaps, right now, they aren't actively engaged in the Torah and mitzvos, but they can return in a moment. The holy neshamah that's in them can be awakened.

This is one of the thoughts we should remember when we are upset with our spiritual level. Remember, there is much spirituality within us, waiting to be ignited and to come to life.

These ideas can give us chizuk. We do believe in Hashem. The neshamah is alive within us. There are tests, but our essence is holy and special. So, instead of focusing on what we do wrong, we should focus on who we are, at our essence, and everything we do right.

The Tzemech Tzedek of Lubavitch zt'l says, "***Think good, and it will be good***."

In Yerushalayim, people would say, "***And if you don't think at all, that is even better***." This can be alluded to in the words **שלח לך אנשים** - and **the Baal HaTurim** writes that the final letters spell **חכ״ם**, wise. If you want to be wise, **שלח לך**, stop thinking about all these disappointing thoughts – whether regarding gashmiyos or ruchniyos. Think positive thoughts about yourself and your life, or be even wiser and **שלח לך**, send away even your wise thoughts and don't think anything at all.

"If they ask me in Shamayim, 'Why were you not Avraham?' I'll say that I didn't have his abilities. If they say, 'Why were you not Moshe?' I'll say I didn't have his humility. For every such question, I'll have an answer. But if they say, "Zusha, why were you not Zusha?" for that, I'll have no answer." ~ Rav Zusha of Anipoli

Opposition by Rabbi Sender Haber



The Jewish people could be pardoned for spying on the land of Israel. It was a regular military tactic and an example of good planning. Their problem was the way that they looked at the land. They forgot about Hashem's promise, and they forgot that the conquest was not completely in their hands. When Yehoshua and Kaleiv tried to remind them, they were stoned. Nobody wanted to look at things differently or to see things from another angle.

It is interesting that both Yehoshua and Kaleiv stayed strong in their opposition to the Meraglim but they stayed strong in different ways.

Yehoshua recieved a blessing from Moshe and a 'yud' added to his name. Kaleiv visited Chevron and prayed at the graves of our ancestors.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that there are two different approaches that a person can take when going against the flow. Some people argue and debate and make a lot of noise voicing their opposition. This is good because it keeps them strong, but bad because they and others can get hurt. Other people stay quiet and try to keep themselves strong. This is a lot safer, but it is very risky. Attitudes of those around us eventually rub off on us and penetrate deep into our souls.

Yehoshua belonged to the first group. From the beginning, he denounced the spies and their attitudes. He stayed strong, but Moshe was concerned for his physical well-being. He gave him a blessing that he would be saved from harm at the hands of the spies.

According to the **Chasam Sofer**, the 'yud' itself connotes the self confidence and assertiveness that Yehoshua had in opposing the spies. The Aruch write that they knew that this was the result of a blessing and mocked him for it, calling him "Reish Ketiah". Still, he held his ground, and the spies were unable to affect him spiritually or physically.

Kaleiv took a different approach. He went along with the spies and did not say a word. When he finally got up to defend Moshe people stopped to listen. They thought that he was on their side.

Kaleiv realized early in the trip that he would need special help from G-d to stay strong. He went to Chevron and prayed to recharge and rejuvenate his soul. This worked as well.

The Chafetz Chaim writes that both approaches are legitimate. Some of us make a lot of noise and some of us are more subtle, but both Yehoshua and Kaleiv could not have done what they did without the blessing from Moshe and the prayers in Chevron. We can't do anything without Hashem.

The spies forgot that they had Hashem and they died in the desert. Yehoshua and Kaleiv relied on Hashem and they merited to usher the Jewish people into the land.

It Is Good, Even If It Seems Bad

וּמָה הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ הַטּוֹבָה הִוא אִם־רָעָה ***And what of the land they inhabit? Is it good or bad?*** 13:19

The Chidushei Harim zy"a explains that Moshe said that he knew that the land is very good. He asked of them that even if it looks bad in their eyes, they should not be quick to say that it is bad. Rather, they should try to see its goodness and, if they do so, they will, in fact, see that it is good.



Now You Know!

When the spies decided to badmouth the land the land of Canaan, they knew that Yehoshua would be a "goody-two shoes" and defend it, so they acted to neutralize his impact and didn't let him speak. Kaleiv, however, got the crowd's attention by beginning what sounded like a tirade against Moshe. He began by saying, "Is this all that ben Amram did to us?!"

Hearing that he wouldn't even call Moshe by his name, something that usually happens when people don't like someone, the people all quieted down to hear the further condemnation of the leader trying to take them to a land that ate its inhabitants.

Kaleiv continued, "He took us from Egypt, split the sea, and gave us Mon to eat!" Then he continued to urge the people to enter the Promised Land and ignore the other spies. Kaleiv acted in a way that is usually scorned – being one way in heart and another in speech. In this case though, doing so enabled him to interrupt the negativity of the spies.

Perhaps a good lesson to take is that nothing in the world is inherently good or bad. Rather, it is what we do with it and how we utilize it which determines its nature. By using even things generally frowned upon, to serve Hashem, we can achieve great things.

"Bitachon is the key that unlocks the door to inner peace and serenity, for when you trust in Hashem, you release the burden of worry and allow yourself to experience true tranquility." – Rabbi Noach Weinberg.

Rabbi Shimon Kaplin - Glasses Falling Down the Nose



A **איד** once came to the **טשעבינער רב זצ"ל** exclaiming, "Everything is going wrong in my life! I cannot cope with life's difficulties! How can I carry on? Everything is happening to me at the same time! I give up!"

The **טשעבינער רב זצ"ל** said to him, "Thirty years ago I was walking on the street on **ערב יום כיפור** when I saw on the other side of the street another **איד**, in one hand he was holding a chicken for **כפרות** and in the other hand he was holding his **מחזור**. As he was walking his glasses began to start falling down his nose! He was in a big dilemma, he didn't know what to do, he couldn't put the chicken down because it would run away from him, and neither could he put the **מחזור** down on the floor… and meanwhile his glasses were about to fall off his nose…

The **איד** is stuck! The chicken in one hand! The **מחזור** in the other hand! The glasses falling off his nose! What should he do?"

The **רב** told this **איד**" I don't know the end of the story, I didn't wait to see what will happen. But one thing I know for sure, he's not still standing there."

He's not still standing there! What did the **טשעבינער רב** mean? What was he teaching this איד?

He was telling the **איד**," Suddenly everything looks black, grey, bleak, what's going to be? There seems to be no end to all the problems in his life life!" Said the **טשעבינער רב** to this **איד**, **אל תדאג** – don't worry, in a few years times it will all be over, things change, circumstances change, difficulties don't last forever, don't give up hope."

Often, a person sees his life bleak and black, but remember this powerful line, "***I don't know how the story ended… but one thing is certain, he's not still standing there***…"

In this weeks **סדרה** we find times where **כלל ישראל** were in a terrible state, **הקב"ה** was going to wipe out all of **כלל ישראל**, things weren't looking good, everything was black. However Moshe Rabeinu then davened for **כלל ישראל**, and we survived.

It's a great **יסוד** for life - a person doesn't remain in a difficult *matzev* forever, we won't be standing in the same position forever, things change, things move on, Hashem doesn't give a person a **צרה** forever, He will change things.

Famous Last Words



An important Rabbi of Tunis was once on a journey accompanied by two of his students. On the way, an Arab accosted them and threatened to kill the Rabbi.

Although there were three of them, they were no match for the Arab, who was tall and muscular, and well-armed.

The students started to plead for the life of their sage and leader, explaining that he was a holy soul. Anyone who sought to harm him, they warned, would bring untold suffering upon himself and his family.

But their words fell on deaf ears. "Your threats mean nothing to me," the Arab cackled. "He is my enemy!"

The Rabbi realized that there was nothing he or his students could say that would deter the Arab. "My sons," he said to his faithful students, "do not put yourselves in danger on my account. Please, I beg of you, save yourselves, for you see that it is against me alone that Heaven has sent this evil hand, and I accept Hashem's decree."

At first the two hesitated, but when the Rabbi insisted, they tearfully took their final leave of their saintly mentor. They retreated into the distance, out of harm's way, but still able to see what would befall their beloved teacher.

The Arab was delighted! "Have you a final request before I slay you?" he barked.

"Yes," answered the Jew. "I would like a drink of water."

The Arab was willing to grant his victim this modest request. The Rabbi took the water from him and prepared to thank his Creator one last time from the depths of his heart. Slowly he uttered each word, with heartrending devotion: "***Baruch…shehakol niheyah bidvaro***!" he declared emphatically, and then he raised the jug to his lips.

As he was drinking, another Arab appeared, a sheik mounted on horseback. The second Arab understood at once what his countryman intended to do. He, too, was far from being a friend of the Jews, but for some inexplicable reason, he took exception to his friend's evil plan.

"Slay any Jew you like!" he roared. "You have my permission to slay them all, but I forbid you to touch a single hair on the head of their Chacham!"

The would-be assassin had no choice but to obey. He freed the Rabbi who set out to look for his followers, who by now were a safe distance away.

When the students met their teacher again, they rejoiced over the Rabbi's sudden rescue. They asked the Rabbi why he had asked for

a drink of water at such a fateful moment. Surely it was not just to quench an ordinary thirst!

"No, it certainly wasn't," agreed the Rabbi. "I didn't need water just then; what I needed was to recite the blessing of shehakol. For thus I was taught by my teachers: The blessing of shehakol can annul the worst of evil decrees - if it is recited with perfect faith that there is, indeed, no other force in all of creation but Hashem alone.

R. Chaim Volozhin, in the Nefesh HaChayim, has taught us that saying the words '***ein od milvado - There is none other beside Him***,' with immense concentration, is a wonderful segulah to overcome the evil desires of others wishing to cause harm.

"When a Jew firmly establishes this principle in his heart, and believes it with complete faith, his enemies have no power over him, no matter how malicious their intents. Indeed, there is no force in the world but the will of Hashem!

"The words of this berachah imply the same meaning as ein od milbado. Shehakol niheyah bidbaro - everything in creation depends on His word. I was saved when I concentrated on this berachah."

There is a well-known rule that the greater a person is, the greater his evil inclination is. [If you ever feel your Yetzer Hara is overpowering you, this is a good thing to remember. It means you're more dangerous to him and he needs to fight you.]

A fellow once approached the Vilna Gaon, who spent his days immersed in Torah study and toil and was known to be a holy individual. "Ah!" said the fellow. "I wish I had YOUR Yetzer Hara." The Gaon looked at the man with no irony and said, "Chas V'Shalom! You would never survive."



There's Always Hope – The Story of Elisha Ben Avuya

(Adapted from a lecture by Rav Ephraim Wachsman)

Elisha ben Avuyah said, **הַלּוֹמֵד יֶלֶד לְמַה הוּא דוֹמֶה, לִדְיוֹ כְתוּבָה עַל נְיָר חָדָשׁ. וְהַלּוֹמֵד זָקֵן לְמַה הוּא דוֹמֶה, לִדְיוֹ כְתוּבָה עַל נְיָר מָחוּק** – "***One who teaches a child is like one who writes with ink on a blank fresh piece of paper. One who teaches an old man is like one who writes with ink on an old piece of paper that has been erased.***" Avos 4:20

This Mishnah is not very encouraging. Rashi comments that one who starts learning late in life has a hard time learning and immediately forgets. It's like writing on a piece of paper that has been erased. The ink doesn't stick and easily rubs off.

We can all relate to that. What we learned as kids sticks with us. You still have the old camp songs rolling around in your head. But the gemara you learned this morning, you don't even know what mesechta it is. Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the person in such a way that as he gets older, he diminishes. And as one gets further and further into life, instead of things getting better, he starts forgetting. This is very disheartening. This is very discouraging for us.

Rabbeinu Yona writes that when one learns when he is young, it is like etching in stone. But when one learns when he is older, it's like writing in sand: the wind just comes and blows it away.

So, what is Elisha ben Avuya coming to teach us? A message of despair and discouragement? What are we supposed to do about this very unpromising appraisal? It's a message of hopelessness.

This Tanna Elisha ben Avuya had a different identity. He was known as Acher – the other one. He was the rebbe of Rav Meir but went off the derech. He forsook Yiddishkeit. As great a gaon Elisha ben Avuya was, he is mentioned only once in shas regarding a halacha, and in mishnayos this is the only quote in all of Shas.

What led him to heresy? He saw [the ministering angel] Mitatron sitting and writing the merits of Yisroel. A heavenly voice was heard: "'*Repent, O backsliding children!' [everyone can do teshuva and come back to Hashem] except for Acher*."

Upon hearing this, Acher said, "Seeing that I have been banished from the World [to Come], at least let me go and enjoy this world." With this Acher went off to evil ways. Now Acher had a talmid: the holy Rav Meir. Rav Meir did everything in his power to bring his rebbe back to Torah.

Having seen and heard very clear messages from Above, what was Elisha ben Avuya – Acher – supposed to have done? He was told very explicitly that he wasn't wanted 'upstairs'. These messages were the epitome of hopelessness and despair in any future. Everywhere he looked in the Torah he was not able to find anything but this message: "You are not wanted! Go away!" What was Acher supposed to have done? What was expected of him? What was his avodah in such circumstances?



The Ba'al Shem Tov explained what Acher's avodah was.

After the door was slammed shut in his face, and after he was told that Acher cannot do teshuva, Acher's avodah was not to be disheartened and dispirited. His avodah was to stand in front of that closed door and insist that "I want to come inside!"

Had he done that, he would have brought the greatest praise and acclaim to the Ribono Shel Olam.

I'll give you a moshol. How do you know how great a doctor is? He's so great, that there are so many people trying to get into see him, he locks the door and doesn't let anybody in. And people are still standing outside the locked door for an opportunity to get in to see him. So, they are singing the greatest praise about this doctor.

The Likutei Maharan writes that the greatest and highest malachim, who sing the greatest praises of the Ribono Shel Olam, cannot bring pleasure to Hashem like a person who is in the pits of despair, and who calls out to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The pleasure that Hashem has is from that person who, despite having been pushed away into the depths, still calls out to the Ribono Shel Olam; that is Hashem's greatest pleasure.

Tosfos in Chagiga quotes the Yerushalmi which discusses a machlokes between Acher and Rav Meir. It says טֹוב אַחֲרִית דָּבָר מֵרֵאשִׁיתָהּ '***The end of a thing is better than its beginning***'. (Koheles 7:8)

Acher interpreted this possuk as meaning that a thing is only good if it had a good beginning. If the beginning was no good, its end is also no good. Rav Meir disagreed. The possuk means that even if the beginning is no good, if the end is good, it is better than the beginning.

Rav Meir understood the same possuk to mean just the opposite: The possuk means that even if the beginning is no good, still, everyone has the ability to create a good ending. And if the end is good, it is better than the beginning.

One must never give up hope! There's always hope. Acher, even when he went into the deepest realms of the hidden secrets of the Torah, the Pardes (the Garden), he failed to understand the even deeper truth. Heaven wanted him to be the source of the greatest hope. All

the doors were shut tight before him. He heard the voice calling out to him, you're not wanted here!

But if he would have looked deeper into the Heavenly voice and heard the deeper message that Hashem was calling out to him not to lose hope; if he would have stood in front of the locked door and insisted that he wants, he must come in.

If he had not given up, he would have taught the greatest lesson possible and been one of the greatest personalities in our history.

Acher is a hint to the last generation of Achris Hayomim. It is a generation that the Zohar Hakodosh says will be just like the Generation of the Mabul (Flood). A generation where the people believe they are hearing a voice call out to them, "Everyone can do teshuvah except for you!" It is a generation where people live with the feeling that the end is only good if the beginning is good. If I messed up when I was young, it's all worthless, there's no hope for me. It's happening younger and younger. I've lost whatever chance I had, so I may as well go out and just enjoy life.

And we are the generation that must not be disheartened. Being the lowest of all the generations, if we call out to Hashem and return to Him from the depths of despair, we can bring the greatest praise to the Ribono Shel Olam. Even though the gates are shut tight; No! Rather because the gates are closed! They are the greatest opportunity, greater than the beginning.

And so, Chazal teach us the Mishnah of Elisha ben Avuya that teaching an old man is like writing on erased paper, the ink won't stick. That's what we have to hear. And our response must be, "So what!" Yes, so what!

We can understand what Elisha ben Avuya didn't understand. He could have been the greatest source of nachas to the Ribono Shel Olam in history. If he would not have given up upon hearing that Heavenly voice, "Acher can't do teshuva," if he would have realized

the message that טֹוב אַחֲרִית דָּבָר מֵרֵאשִׁיתֹו '***The end of a thing is better than its beginning***'. - The most important thing is the end, and the end can be greater than the beginning. When the door is shut tight before you, you must say, I can accomplish something for the Ribono Shel Olam that no one else can.

Rav Yerucham Levovitz asked how could it be that this generation is going to bring Moshiach? The Ribono Shel Olam couldn't find a Moshiach from the Tannaim, from the Amoraim, from the Rishonim, from the Achronim. But from our lowly generation, He will find a Moshiach?

Rav Yerucham answered, YES! Only this generation who have this magnificent beautiful avodah of standing before closed doors and still calling out to the Ribono Shel Olam. If we don't give up but persist and struggle and call out to the Ribono Shel Olam from behind the locked door, we may be greater than all the previous generations and we will merit Moshiach.



Just Imagine…!

וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִת וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת ה' וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא־תָתוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם זֹנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם "***And it will be to you for fringes, and you will look upon it and you will remember all of Hashem's commandments, and you will perform them; and you will not search after [the desire of] your hearts and after your eyes which cause you to go astray.***" (Bamidbar 15:39)

A poor person was invited to a meal at a wealthy man's house. When all the guests were finished with their first course, the rich man rang a bell. Almost at once, waiters came in to remove the dishes and bring in the next course. The poor man was amazed. He had never seen anything like that before.

After the second course was completed, the host again rang the bell, and again the waiters removed the plates and brought yet more food. The poor man was so impressed that he purchased a similar bell for his own house. He returned home very excited! He told his wife. "We are going to have unlimited food and waiters. Wait until you see what I brought home!"

He immediately placed the bell on the table and told his family and friends to take their regular seats. He then rang the bell with confidence. He waited for a waiter to walk in—but nothing happened!

"I don't understand it! When the rich man rang the bell, all the food was served!"

The next day he returned the bell to the store that he purchased it in. "The bell you sold me is useless. I did not get a response when I rang it."

The obvious reason nothing happened, says the **Dubno Maggid**, is because there was neither a waiter nor food prepared in the next room. Preparation was necessary for the bell to accomplish anything.

In some ways many of us are like this man, continues the Dubno Maggid. For example, the Torah says if we look at our tzitzis, we will be reminded to perform all of Hashem's mitzvos. There are many people, though, who can look at a pair of tzitzis and not be reminded of anything. Only if one studies and understands how the tzitzis represent the 613 mitzvos, and studies what the 613 mitzvos are, can one appreciate what his viewing of the tzitzis should accomplish. Merely to look them without any preparation is like ringing a bell without having arranged for anyone to respond.

Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg zt"l was known to wear as many as 175 pairs of tzitzis at the same time. Once, when Rav Sheinberg was fundraising in Florida, a woman approached him. Her son was not on the correct Jewish path. She thought that if her son wore a pair of Rav Scheinberg's tzitzis, perhaps it would reignite the spark of Yiddishkeit within her son.

Rav Scheinberg's son, who was assisting him, told the woman that she could have a pair of tzitzis if she would donate one thousand dollars to the yeshivah. [He had a very good reason to ask for that, as we will soon see]. Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg told the woman that he also wanted to see her son personally. He told the son, "Your mother just gave a thousand dollars because she cares about you so much, and I don't want your tzitzis to be sitting in a drawer. I want you to promise me that you will wear these tzitzis for one minute a day— that's it."

The son could not say no. He ended up wearing the tzitzis for more than a minute a day. The tzitzis had such an effect on him that after six months of wearing them, he went to learn Torah in Yeshiva Ohr Somayach!

This all came about from one minute of wearing tzitzis.

When you visualize a certain situation in your mind and then imagine how you would react to it, it helps to prepare you, should that situation occur. Visual imagery is a very beneficial tool in strengthening ourselves to perform mitzvos and to stave off the yetzer hara.

There is a fascinating story in Sefer Shmuel I (Shmuel 1 17:33-37). Before King Dovid became king, as a young lad, he volunteered to King Shaul that he would represent the Jewish People to fight against the Plishtim's giant, Goliath. King Shaul was sceptical since Dovid was untrained while Goliath was a seasoned warrior. Dovid replied that Hashem had shown him previously, that he was capable.

Dovid was a shepherd. Once, a lion and a bear appeared simultaneously. One of them carried off a lamb from the flock that Dovid was watching. Dovid then killed both the bear and lion with his bare hands. Dovid felt that this was a sign from Hashem that he would also be capable of fighting against Goliath. King Shaul agreed and let Dovid go to battle. Dovid beat Goliath.

The Vilna Gaon says that Dovid realized that a miracle had occurred through this sheep. Therefore, he slaughtered the sheep and made a garment of its skin. He always wore that garment to remember the miracle that Hashem had performed for him.

Dovid used this imagery to constantly remember Hashem's kindness to him. The Torah says (Bamidbar 15:39) that you should look at the tzitzis that you are wearing. This will in turn help you remember the mitzvos and then you will be able to fulfil them.

HaKsav VeHaKabalah explains that the pasuk doesn't literally mean that looking at the tztzis will help you remember the mitzvos. Rather, it means thinking about the tzitzis intently and with intensity.

Rebbe said in Pirkei Avos (2:1) that if we contemplate and visualize three things in our minds then we will not sin. We should envision what is above us — a seeing eye and a hearing ear and that all our deeds are recorded. Rabbeinu Yona says that these three things are the same one idea. If we have an awareness that Hashem knows and remembers all that we do, then we won't sin.

If it is all one idea, why did Rebbe mention all three? The answer is that if we visualize each one separately, it will have a stronger impact on our actions and help protect us from sin.

Rabbeinu Bachya, the Or HaChaim, and others say that the pasuk does mean that you should have an actual visual reminder. You should look at your tzitzis. The visual impact of seeing tzitzis triggers your memory which, in turn, leads to the performance of the

commandments. It is also a reminder that you are Hashem's servant and that you should not allow your eyes and heart to bring you to sin.

Fulfilling the mitzvah of tzitzis only costs a few dollars, yet its impact is priceless! One can use both visual imagery as well as actual sight of an object to strengthen oneself to perform mitzvos and come closer to Hashem.



Impervious As a Stone

This week's *parsha* starts with the *pasuk* (13:2): **שלח לך אנשים** – "Send men that they may spy out the land." Rashi comments: "Why is the section dealing with the spies juxtaposed with the section dealing with Miriam? Because she was punished for matters of slander, for speaking against her brother, and these wicked people witnessed it, but did not learn their lesson."

The Medrash seems difficult to understand, the spies spoke slanderously about an inanimate entity, namely Eretz Yisroel, not about a person. How were they expected to realize from the episode of Miriam that not only someone who speaks against a person but even he who speaks slanderously about inanimate objects, against "sticks and stones" is punished?

Moshe Rabbeinu was the humblest person who ever lived, and was therefore not personally hurt when Miriam spoke against him. Hence she was only speaking against "sticks and stones", and the spies should therefore have understood that just like Miriam was punished, even though the person she was slandering was completely impervious to her words, so too would they be worthy of punishment

for speaking against Eretz Yisroel, even though "sticks and stones" do not feel personally offended.

This quality of inner strength and being impervious to the statements and views of others which Moshe possessed, manifests itself not only in the trait of modesty, but also in the case of positive pride, whereby a person has to make himself impervious to the false views and attitudes of those he comes into contact with. (**R' Moshe Sternbuch**)



Admiration!

The great *tzaddik*, **R' Arieh Shechter**, the director of *Arachim*, a program that brings Hashem's children to their heritage, conveys the following story:

"Forty-five years ago, I was approached by a group of individuals that wanted to make a *macha'ah*, protest. We lived in a *chiloni* setting where most of the town's residents weren't Torah observers. There was a yeshiva in the community, yet they were far from the majority of the neighbourhood.



"Across from the yeshivah was a non-observant Jew, a Holocaust survivor who had a hatred toward Yidden and particularly toward the yeshivah. He showed his disapproval of their presence in many ways, for example, blasting his radio at a high volume on Shabbos, so the noise would bother them.

"The people of the community were planning to protest this man's improper behaviour, and they asked me to join them.

"I asked them, 'Have you tried approaching him kindly before making a protest? Going and outright protesting is not the first step; first try peacefully.

"'Furthermore,' I continued, 'do you understand his situation? He's a survivor; can you imagine what he went through in his life? Before approaching someone, you must understand their situation.' Well, they didn't listen to my advice and made the *macha'ah* anyway.

"A little while later, a kind man gave me a large sum of money to open a shul in the neighbourhood, and that's what I did. The location of the new shul was perpendicular from this man's home. The first Shabbos that the shul opened, the entire community was filled with much joy over the conclusion of the new building, and many came that Shabbos morning to celebrate the occasion.

"The excitement didn't last long. During the davening, I saw the man coming into the shul, and I immediately braced myself for the worst. Knowing everything he had done in the past, I figured he was coming to make trouble. I was certain that he wasn't coming to daven.

"Surprisingly, he remained until the end of the davening without any incident. Instead, at the conclusion of davening he approached me with a question. 'In a few weeks, my son is becoming Bar Mitzvah, and since there isn't any shul that would host it, I would like to have the *simchah* in your shul. Would you host it?'

"'Of course!' I told him. 'It would be the shul's honor and pleasure to host your *simchah*!'

"The man was bewildered. 'Don't you know who I am?! I'm the man the all the boys are upset at. I'm the one who causes so much aggravation to the yeshivah and the neighbours. Why are you still willing to host us?'

"'I didn't agree with their protest,' I told him. 'That is not the ideal way to handle such a matter. I don't have any issue hosting your beautiful *simchah*.

"'However, I have one recommendation,' I continued. 'Since you don't know how things are conducted in this shul, I advise that you come for several weeks and partake in the davening, so you'll celebrate the Bar Mitzvah as one of us.'

"The man agreed, and for the next several weeks he came to shul. When the Shabbos of the Bar Mitzvah arrived, I brought special cakes, pastries, and drinks—a magnificent spread. I even delivered a speech that uplifted the man and gave him tremendous respect and admiration.

"To everyone's shock, this very same person who had blasted the radio on Shabbos started coming each and every week to shul, and over the time, he started keeping Shabbos…

"We see that we have no idea what lies in every Yid. With just the right value and respect, we were able to change this man."

Their Greatness

Reb Efraim Wachsman, *shlita*, had a *melamed*, teacher, who had survived the Holocaust. When the children of his class acted up, he would say things at them in a foreign language. The children assumed his words were Hungarian curses and that he was lashing out at them for their misdeeds. At the end of the year, some children approached and asked him *mechilah,* forgiveness, for causing him distress to the extent that he would curse them.

He replied, "*Chas v'shalom*! I never cursed you. The words I said were *Onkelos*'s translation for the twelve stones that were placed in the *Choshen*, which represent the twelve *shevatim*. To prevent myself from getting angry, I reminded myself of the stones of the *Choshen*. Each Yid is holy, compared to the diamonds and gems set

in the *Choshen*. My murmurings weren't curses; they were reminding me of the *chashivus*, esteemed value, that each of you have."

Recap

Acknowledging the greatness of every individual and the impact that every person has results in their greatness coming forth.

The **Alter of Slabodkah** brought out this concept very strongly. He would bring forth the value of every student of his and was therefore very successful in fighting the *Haskalah*.

"Acknowledging the greatness within," says **R' Yerucham Levovitz**, "is more important than knowing the areas that need improvement."

Not knowing where one can improve is bad, since he doesn't know where to start. But much more severe is not identifying the great and budding potential within. Bringing forth the goldmine that lies within can reveal an inner treasure that otherwise would've remained buried. Acknowledgment and admiration in ourselves and others brings forward the hiding had it not been recognized.

TORAH TAVLIN הוא היה אומר

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

R' Moshe Sofer (Schreiber) zt"l (Chasam Sofer) would say:

וְעַבְדִּי כָלֵב עֵקֶב הָיְתָה רוּחַ אַחֶרֶת עִמּוֹ - (14:24) What was the רוּחַ אַחֶרֶת that protected Kalev from the spies?

The Zohar says that the spies were scared to go into Chevron due to the massive giants living there. However, Kalev was more afraid of falling in with the spies and so he forgot about his fear of the giants and went to Chevron to daven anyway.

Thus, it says וַיָּבֹא עַד־חֶבְרוֹן - he (singular) went to Chevron (13:22). Only he went. His רוּחַ אַחֶרֶת was that he channelled his fear of the giants to fear of rebelling against Hashem."

משל למה הדבר דומה

סלח נא לעון העם הזה כגדל חסדך ... (יד-כ)

One Shabbos morning, as **R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zt"l**, made his way to shul, he met a young Jew who was smoking a cigar in public, in a most bold-faced manner. Surprised, R' Levi Yitzchok stopped and said: "My son, have you forgotten that today is Shabbos?" "No," answered the young man; "I know that today is Shabbos."

R' Levi Yitzchok countered, "Then surely you are not aware that smoking on Shabbos is prohibited?" "No," the brazen young man answered again. "I know that smoking is prohibited on Shabbos."

"Aha" said the holy Kedushas Levi, "I see what the problem is here. Maybe your teeth ache and you think it permissible in such an event to use it as a remedy, even on Shabbos?" "No, I do not need to smoke as a remedy. Nothing is hurting me. I'm perfectly sound and well."

R' Levi Yitzchok was nonplussed for a minute, but then raised his eyes to the heavens and exclaimed: "Ribono shel Olam, what a wonderful people are your children, that even their sinners have some merit left in them! For even such a brazen-faced one as this young man, would rather condemn himself by telling the truth, than hide his sins!"

The role of a Jewish leader - and in a sense, of each one of us - is to advocate for our people, not to complain about them. Of course, at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner, a leader is required to rebuke his people so they will improve. But in speaking to Hashem, the leader's obligation is to pray on their behalf, to only emphasize their virtues and good deeds. There are enough "prosecuting" angels in the heavens, and they don't need our help!

Our focus must instead be directed towards all that is beautiful about the Jewish Nation. To implore Hashem that he should shower His beloved people with joy, success and prosperity.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ראשית ערסתכם חלה תרימו תרומה כתרומת גרן כן תרימו אתה ... (טו-כ)

When **Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky a"h** used to make challah every Thursday afternoon in her little kitchen in Bnei Brak, many women would come to watch and join her as she made the dough, said the beracha and davened for Klal Yisroel. Wiping her hands on her apron, with a wide smile on her face, she welcomed guests with the warmest "Shalom Aleichem," and made them feel like royalty as she offered cold drinks and showered them with heartfelt berachos.



As a group was escorted by the Rebbetzin herself into her tiny kitchen, she would tell individual people to stand near her and answer amen to her berachos. Then, she would begin. There was absolute silence as the Rebbetzin sprinkled some flour onto the dough, then placed her hand under the cover of the huge plastic bowl. She carefully separated a small piece of dough from the mixture and held it aloft for all to see, proclaiming, "This is challah." Rebbetzin Kanievsky then loudly made the beracha of hafrashas challah, and all the women and girls present answered a resounding "Amen!"

Still keeping her hand with the piece of challah deep inside the bowl, the Rebbetzin whispered her special tefillos for quite a long time. It seemed like many minutes. Nobody moved or made a sound as they watched her daven to Hashem.

The group just stared, in awe of such kavanah and devotion to the Ribbono shel Olam while performing a mitzvah.

After the Rebbetzin finished her tefillos for hafrashas challah, she began accepting slips of paper, almost like a Rebbe accepting kvitlach, on which were written names and requests for berachos for various refuos and yeshuos. Rebbetzin Kanievsky read each and every name out loud, gave a warm, heartfelt beracha, and all together, the women in her presence would shout "Amen!"

By the time the last name was read, there wasn't a dry eye in the room. Their faces were literally drenched with tears, so deeply and emotionally ensconced in the bakashos of fellow Yidden in need. That tiny little kitchen, spilling into the hallway, was like a holy temple. Nobody wanted to leave. They all just wanted to absorb more and more of Rebbetzin Kanievsky's warm and loving presence. She would smile at each woman or girl and wish them a very good Shabbos, with kol tuv. She heaped berachos upon every single Yid.

It was a memory most will never forget. The Rebbetzin passed away on Chol HaMoed Sukkos and her daughter, Rebbetzin Leah Kolodetsky ybl"c took over many of the chores and duties from her mother. One of the major things was that she began to make challah with women and guests on Thursday afternoon, just as her mother did for so many years. Following the precise manner in which she saw her holy mother do it growing up, to many it was as if a torch had passed, with the flame still burning bright.

A few weeks after she began making challah with women, Rebbetzin Kolodetsky realized that Chanukah was soon approaching, and that the Thursday afternoon of Chanukah would not be a good time for women to come since they have to be home for Chanukah licht. She

hung a sign on her door which read, "This Thursday will be Chanukah so we will not be doing hafrashas challah together. B'ezras Hashem, we will continue again next week."

That night, the Rebbetzin had a dream. Her mother, Rebbetzin Kanievsky, came to her and said, "Leah, why did you cancel the hafrashas challah? Do you know how much nachas ruach it brings to Hashem in shamayim when you make challah with the women?"

Rebbetzin Kolodetzky woke up and thought to herself, I am sure this dream doesn't mean anything. It is probably my own guilty feelings for canceling the challah. So, she didn't say anything to anyone and went through her day. However, that night she went to sleep, and her mother came again and said the same thing. Rebbetzin Kanievsky told her daughter that it is so important to keep having her hafrashas challah events as it brings many zechusim to people.

After the second dream, Rebbetzin Kolodetzky realized this was real. She went to her father, **R' Chaim zt"l** and told him about her dreams. He told her, "Take down the sign and make challah with the women even on Chanukah."

Of course, she listened to the words of her father. Undoubtedly, Rebbetzin Kolodetzky hasn't missed a week since.



Shabbos is At the Top - מְקשֵׁשׁ עֵצִים

The people of Yisrael were in the Wilderness, and they found a man gathering wood on the day of Shabbos. Hashem said to

Moshe, the man shall be put to death. The entire congregation shall stone him with stones. (*Bamidbar* 15:32-35)

It is surprising how strictly the Torah treats the matter of *Shabbos* observance. Unlike any other *mitzvah* in the Torah, the severest punishment applies to the tiniest infringement of its laws.

Here in the *parshah* we have a case of someone who just picked up a few pieces of wood in the field, and was imprisoned for this until they could clarify the proper punishment for his sin. In the end, he was found liable for *sekilah,* stoning, which is the severest punishment of all.

Let's say someone would burn a whole *Sefer Torah, chas v'shalom.* He thereby destroyed *Hashem's* holy Name hundreds and hundreds of times. But he is not liable for the death penalty.

Let's say someone eats pork, *chas v'shalom.* He thereby renders his whole soul impure. But he is not liable for the death penalty. Even if someone commits murder, *chas v'shalom,* he is not liable for the same severity of punishment that a *Shabbos* desecrator is.

A murderer is liable for death by the sword, whereas someone who does even the lightest work on *Shabbos,* such as turning on a light or skimming the cream off of milk, is liable for stoning, which is the toughest punishment there is.

Why is every little detail of Shabbos observance, at least as regards the thirty-nine types of Biblical melachos, treated with such awesome severity?

The following metaphor answers the question: Let's say a person has a wounded arm or leg, and the doctor determines that he needs an operation in order to heal it. If the surgeon isn't careful and makes the incision an inch or two from the right spot, this could cause significant injury to the patient, but it won't cost him his life.

Now let's say it is an open-heart operation, or brain surgery. In these most of sensitive places, on which one's very life depends, even the

smallest error can end in tragedy. Because these are central to the body's functioning. They are the core.

This is how it is with *Shabbos kodesh.* It is the heart and the centre of all *kedushah.* It is the source of all blessing. The *Shechinah* rests upon it, and it is where a Jewish soul draws its lifeforce from. So if a person damages *Shabbos,* even if it is a very small infraction, it causes internal injury in the core of his heart and soul, and results in tragedy. It injures the person's *kedushah* and his essential nature as a Jew and his *emunah.*

The resulting wound is so great that *Chazal* describe a public *Shabbos* desecrator as being like a non-Jew as regards many *halachos.*

And the reverse is true, as well. If a person keeps *Shabbos* meticulously, he is attached to the source and fountain of *kedushah* and *chayim,* because *Shabbos* resembles *Olam Haba,* which is eternal life with endless *kedushah* and *berachah.* All blessings and all types of sanctity come to rest upon him in his lifetime, as *Chazal* say: Whoever treats *Shabbos* with pleasure is granted a boundless inheritance.



Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

למטה יהודה כלב בן יפנה: (יג:ו) ***For the tribe of Yehuda, Kaleiv ben Yephuneh***. (13:6)

Was he really the son of Yephuneh? Was he not the son of Chetzron, as it says in Divrei HaYamim I (2:18) **וכלב בן חצרון הוליד את עזובה** - 'Kaleiv ben Chetzron had children by his wife Azuvah'? Rather, he was called 'ben Yephuneh' because he was **פנה**, meaning that 'he turned from' the designs of the spies. (Sotah 11b)

Rabbi Peysach Krohn- Project Mesorah



It says in the Pasuk 13:33 - **וַנְּהִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כַּחֲגָבִים וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם** ***In our eyes, we seemed like grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes.***

The Kotzker Rebbe says that the second part of the Pasuk is the reason for the first part of the Pasuk.

The first part of the Pasuk indicates that they had a low image of themselves. They looked at themselves as though they were grasshoppers compared to the giants. And that's why the giants looked at them in that way.

A person must have a positive image about themselves. You have to appear confident, mature and intelligent. You must know what you are talking about. You must present yourself in a positive way. You have to feel good about yourself, feel the part, dress the part, act the part and talk the part.

And then, people will look at you with respect.

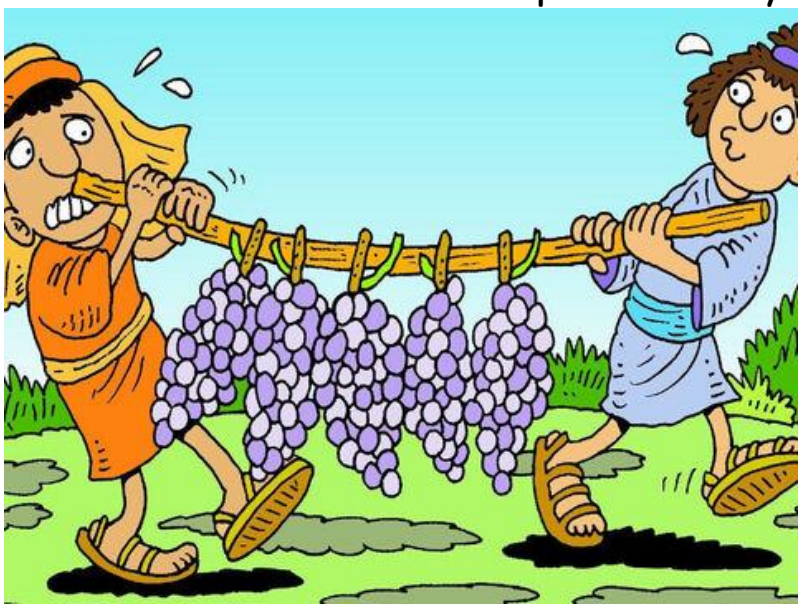
Predictions

"Astronomers have predicted that a comet would collide with the earth and cause much death, damage and destruction, but in fact it hasn't happened. Because man can say what he wants, but a human mind can never predict with certainty the will of the Almighty concerning this world." ~ **R' Yosrael of Chortkov zt"l**

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה מִמִּדְבַּר פָּארָן עַל־פִּי ה' כֻּלָּם אֲנָשִׁים רָאשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵמָּה 13:3

The Torah refers to the spies sent by Moshe to scout out Eretz Yisroel as **אנשים**, a term typically used to describe important men of stature. Why is this word used in conjunction with the spies, who incited the Jewish people to rebel against the Divine plan for them to enter and conquer the land of Israel?



Rashi explains that this expression is used to teach us that at the time the spies were sent, they were still righteous and had no plans to sin by speaking negatively about Eretz Yisroel.

This is difficult to understand, for Rashi later writes (Devorim 1:22) that just as the spies returned from their expedition with evil intentions, so too did they depart with evil intentions, which seems to contradict his comments here.

In his sefer Gur Aryeh, **the Maharal** answers that the spies were indeed virtuous when they left, as Rashi writes here. However, they were sent as agents of the rest of the nation, who did not believe that they could successfully conquer and inhabit Eretz Yisroel, and

a shaliach (agent) becomes influenced by the intentions of those who send him on his mission.

Although this insight into the sin of the spies is fascinating, it also seems to absolve them of responsibility for their wrongdoing, yet the Torah makes clear (14:36-37) that Hashem held them accountable for their actions and they were punished harshly.

If their sin was a result of being negatively influenced by the rest of the nation who sent them on their mission, why were they blamed for it, and what should they have done differently?

The Chiddushei HaRim explains that as the spies prepared to set out, they should not have seen themselves as representatives of the nation, but rather as agents of Hashem and Moshe, which would have insulated them from being affected by the aims of the other people. Their fatal flaw was their mental decision to depart not as angelic emissaries doing the will of Hashem, but rather as earthly representatives of the nation, which set the stage for them to be led astray by those who dispatched them.

Applying this concept to our own lives, the **Sfas Emes** notes that we make countless choices during the course of a day. Typically, we make our decisions based on what seems correct and logical to us. If we instead decide to undertake projects not for our own motivations and rationales, but because Hashem wants them to be done, we will merit tremendous blessing and success by becoming Hashem's angelic representatives in all that we do.

Parsha Points to Ponder

What is the connection between Parshas Shelach and the number 2800?



The Gemora quotes Reish Lakish, who says that a person who is scrupulous in his fulfilment of the mitzvah of tzitzis (Bamidbar 15:37-41) will be rewarded with 2800 servants in the Messianic era. As proof, he cites a verse in Zechariah (8:23) that states that at that time, ten men from each of the seventy nations of the world will take hold of each corner of a Jew's garment (where the tzitzis are placed) and express their desire to go with him.

Thus, 700 people (10 x 70) will grab each corner of the garment, and since it has four corners, he will have 2800 people (700 x 4) to serve him.

The Maharsha notes that it is difficult to interpret the verse literally, for it is physically impossible for 2800 people to simultaneously hold on to the corners of one garment, so Chazal read it as an allusion to the tremendous reward for the mitzvah of tzitzis, which helps us remember all 613 mitzvos (Rashi 15:39) and saves us from sin (Menachos 44a).

The Nimukei Yosef writes that non-Jews will recognize the greatness of the mitzvah of tzitzis, which protected us in exile and helped bring us to the World to Come. However, **the Arizal** writes that somebody who is careful with the mitzvah of tzitzis will merit 1800 servants, not 2800.

The Vilna Gaon resolves the apparent contradiction by explaining that the Gemora is referring to generations that had techeiles dye to put in their tzitzis, while the Arizal is discussing the present time when we lack techeiles.

The numerical value of the word **ציצית** is 600, and because this term appears in the Torah three times, a person who is vigilant to perform

the mitzvah properly receives 1800 servants (600 x 3). In the Talmudic era, when they had techeiles, they warranted an additional 1000 servants, which is the numerical value of **כנף תכלת**– (a corner of techeiles), for a total of 2800.

A Wise Man would say: "The best inheritance parents can give their children is a few minutes of their time each day."

One Can Recognize His Own Greatness Without Being Arrogant, by Rav Yissochor Frand

The final statement the Meraglim made concerning their report regarding what they saw in the Land of Israel was: **וְשָׁם רָאִינוּ אֶת־ הַנְּפִילִים בְּנֵי עֲנָק מִן־הַנְּפִלִים וַנְּהִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כַּחֲגָבִים וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם** "*There we saw the Nephillim, the sons of a giant from among the Nephillim; we in our eyes like grasshoppers; and so too were we in their eyes.*" [Bamidbar 13:33]

We have commented in past years – how did the spies know how they looked to the Canaanites? They were, after all, not mind readers. The answer we have given is that if one perceives himself as a grasshopper then that will be how others perceive him as well! To put it colloquially, "if you think you are a shmateh [rag], then that is how others will look at you as well."

This is an important lesson in life. We must have a certain level of confidence in who we are. No one should make the mistake to think (as some people do) that if I think I am not a grasshopper then I am being haughty. This is not a matter of arrogance. The definition of modesty is not to go around saying "I am nothing. I know nothing. I am a zero." The definition of appropriate modesty is to recognize who I am and what talents I have, but not to be proud about it because I realize that it is all a gift from the Master of the World.

If a person has a beautiful voice and they ask him to daven as the Shliach Tzibur, he should not say "I cannot carry a tune." That would be patently untrue. But when he gets up to daven he should not think that he is deserving of great honour because he can sing so beautifully. The ability to sing is a gift from G-d and that is true of all the human abilities that a person may possess. We are charged to use the gifts G-d gives us appropriately in His service.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, was the picture of humility. He was an extremely humble person. I am told that he was once getting into a car on the Lower East Side and someone on the street called out in a loud voice "Moshe!" (to someone else entirely), but the Gadol Hador assumed it was he who was being addressed and calmly asked "What can I do for you?"



And yet the same Rav Moshe Feinstein was once at a wedding and a young man approached him and asked him a question to which Rav Moshe gave him an answer. The young man raised his voice and asked a question on the answer Rav Moshe gave him and again received another answer from Rav Moshe. This continued several more rounds with the young man raising his voice higher and higher with each successive exchange. Until, finally Rav Moshe Feinstein took him by the arm, led him aside and said to him, "Young man, I don't believe you understand who you are talking to!" Meaning, I am Rav Moshe Feinstein and you don't talk to me like that.

What about the humble Rav Moshe Feinstein on the Lower East Side who responded to someone who yelled out "Moshe"?

This is not a contradiction. Rav Moshe Feinstein knew who he was.

I recently heard another story where a young man asked Rav Moshe a question at a wedding and Rav Moshe gave him an answer. The young man asked, "Does the Rosh Yeshiva know that the Pri Megadim rules just the opposite?" To which Rav Moshe answered, "Yes. I have learned that Pri Megadim 296 times."

How could he talk like that if he was so modest? The same answer: He knew who he was.

I heard a story many years ago regarding the **Chasam Sofer**. I have never verified it. There was a certain question regarding an Agunah [woman whose husband's death was doubtful] that became a 'cause célèbre' and involved great Rabbinic opinions on both sides of the issue. The matter came to the Chasam Sofer. He thought about it, took out his pen and in a half hour wrote a responsa to permit the woman to remarry.

They asked him, how he could be so bold and confident when it was such a controversial matter. He answered "I have the pen of authority in these matters in this generation."

In other words, he could say about himself that he was the final word, and what he said about the matter was the definitive psak halacha. Finished.

These people were tremendously humble people, but they knew who they were and they knew what the psak was and they were not afraid to exercise their authority. This is not haughtiness.

Rabbi Shimon Kaplin - The Broken Motorbike



I saw a story brought down about a fellow in America who was fixing his powerful motorbike in his garden when suddenly as he was revving the engine, it went into gear… as he was holding on, the motorbike began to drag him straight through the glass patio into his dining room and beyond, he was in a very serious state, bruised and bashed with the motorbike flying all over the place!

His wife came in to see what was going on, she ran straight away to call the ambulance, she ran downstairs to be there when the ambulance come to direct them up to patient.

The ambulance came, took him to hospital, meanwhile his poor wife spent three hours cleaning up all the mess, the smashed glass the broken furniture and mopping up the petrol that came out of the bike, and squeezing the mop into the toilet.

When he came home after six hours, he was bandaged all over and was in great pain.

He went to the toilet and lit a cigarette there and after smoking it threw the cigarette into the toilet… and as you can imagine the next thing that happened was a big bang! A big explosion, now he was in a real state, he was burnt, his clothes flew off!

His wife again runs and calls the ambulance and the same ambulance crew come up the stairs, on the way down as they are carrying him out on the stretcher they ask her, "What happened again?!"

She told them the story, when they heard his story, they started laughing so much they dropped the stretcher, and he rolled down the stairs!

Apparently a true story, but what's **פשט** in such a story? What's **הקב"ה** doing here? The fellow gets the same ambulance for three accidents in one day?

It's known about the **חפץ חיים** that when he was eight years old the Rebbe asked all the boys in his class, "If you would be **הקב"ה** what would you do?!"

One boy said, "*Nebech, yena* **משפחה** has no *gelt*… I would make sure they have *gelt*." The next boy said, "My friend's mother is not well, I would give her a **רפואה שלימה** ."

Each boy had something else to say. When he came to the **חפץ חיים**, he said, "If I would be **הקב"ה** I would do nothing! Everything is perfect!"

The **חפץ חיים** already at the age of eight was different from the other boys in the class.

What did the **חפץ חיים** mean?

We must realise that **הקב"ה** loves us and everything He is doing to us is only **לטובתינו**.

If we strengthen ourselves in this area then our perception of difficulties will be in the way, this is what the **חפץ חיים** meant, "Nothing! I wouldn't change a thing!

הקב"ה only does good! and in our crazy story there's a plan and a **חשבון** in everything that happens.

Rabbi Shimon Kaplin - Torah Is What Identifies Us

The date that **כלל ישראל** left **מצרים** is a date that we all know, it's a day which we celebrate with tremendous **שמחה**. However, the date **כלל שיראל** entered into **ארץ ישראל** is not known by most people.

There is no **יום טוב** or a remembrance for the day that **כלל ישראל** entered into **ארץ ישראל** . After the **גלות** of **חורבן בית ראשון** – after

70 years, nobody knows the date that **כלל ישראל** returned, there is no mention of it in our yearly calendar. There is no celebration or **יום טוב** on that date.

The **תורה הקדושה** concludes with **מיתת משה**. The **תורה** could have continued about **כלל ישראל** 's history once they went into **ארץ ישראל** and described the joy of receiving the land they were waiting for all these years. However, the **תורה** stops before **כלל ישראל** entered into **ארץ ישראל** , without telling us anything about their arrival to **ארץ ישראל**.

We drink four cups of wine on **סדר** -night corresponding to the four expressions of **גאולה** in the **פסוקים** "**והוצאתי, והצלתי, וגאלתי, ולקחתי**".

The **חתם סופר** asks: Why did **חז"ל** not establish a fifth **כוס** to drink on **סדר** -night corresponding to the word "**והבאתי**" – I will bring you to **ארץ ישראל** , which is also mentioned in the **פסוקים** ?

Explains the **חתם סופר**: Going to **ארץ ישראל** was not one of the important parts of **כלל ישראל** 's history. **יציאת מצרים** which is our **יסוד** of **אמונה** , we celebrate and make a big **יום טוב** about it. Whereas, **הקב"ה** never told us to make a **יום טוב** about going into to **ארץ ישראל** and nor were Chazal **מתקן** a **יום טוב** when they returned to **ארץ ישראל** after 70 years of **גלות**.

What's *taka* the understating? Why when **כלל ישראל** came to **ארץ ישראל** there wasn't a **יום טוב** or any remembrance of this day? Why when **כלל ישראל** returned after the 70 years of **גלות** did **חז"ל** not establish a **יום טוב** for the coming years? Why isn't there any celebration for coming into **ארץ ישראל** ?

The answer is very simple – one of the basic **השקפות** which we must have: **כלל ישראל** are not dependent on being in **ארץ ישראל** – in being in their homeland. All the other nations of the world are dependent on the place they live – that defines them, that displays who they are. When a **גוי** emigrates, a few generations later, the grandchildren have long forgotten the nation they emigrated from. After moving

from England to Spain, it doesn't take long until the **גוי** and his grand children become Spanish, and forget completely about their past, where they emigrated from.

A **גוי** is **תולה** on his country – that is his identity, his identity is dependent on the place he lives.

However, **כלל ישראל** are not identified only with their country, that's not our entire identification. We don't identify ourselves with the country we live in. **ארץ ישראל** doesn't give us the identity of being a **איד** .

Land doesn't give us our identity. But rather, what gives us our identity is one thing - The **תורה הקדושה**. After the Russian revolution – a few decades had gone by already without **תורה**. The **אידן** were lost and assimilated amongst the **גוים**. Whereas **כלל ישראל** for 2000 years without having a land remained true to their heritage through **תורה**. Our identity is dependent on **תורה**.

We must understand that it's the **תורה** which defines us. And if we are not defined by the **תורה** then – it's *gornished*, there is nothing there. We must have one single **שאיפה** in life, a goal for **תורה** and nothing else.

כלל ישראל 's identity is through **תורה** – through connecting with **יציאת מצרים**, we remember it every day and celebrate it for seven days a year. A connection with **הקב"ה** identifies us! **סוכות** under the covering of **הקב"ה** being **דבוק** to **הקב"ה** we celebrate with immense **שמחה**. We celebrate **שבועות** – the day we received the **תורה הקדושה** ! - These are days that define us. These are our **ימים טובים**.

Coming into **ארץ ישראל** was an event, however, not an event that defines us or gives us any identification. Our identity is defined by the **תורה**, that keeps us as a nation and that keeps us being the **עם סגולה** – it's our true and real desire. There must be only one essential theme in our lives - **לימוד התורה**, and nothing else should be part of

our true goals in life. "**היש בה עץ אם אין**" – If there is **תורה** – good, however, if there is no **תורה** it's *gornished*.

אחת שאלתי מאת ה', אותה אבקש. שבתי בבית ה' כל ימי חיי, לחזות בנעם ה' ולבקר בהיכלו One thing I asked to Hashem, that I want, that I may dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life. To see the sweetness of Hashem and to visit his היכל.

Ask Around Your Shabbos Table

וּמָה הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ הֲטוֹבָה הִוא אִם־רָעָה And what of the land they inhabit? Is it good or bad? 13:19

Since already back in Mitzrayim, Hashem told to Moshe that Eretz Yisroel is a good Land, why did Moshe ask the spies to see if the land is good?!

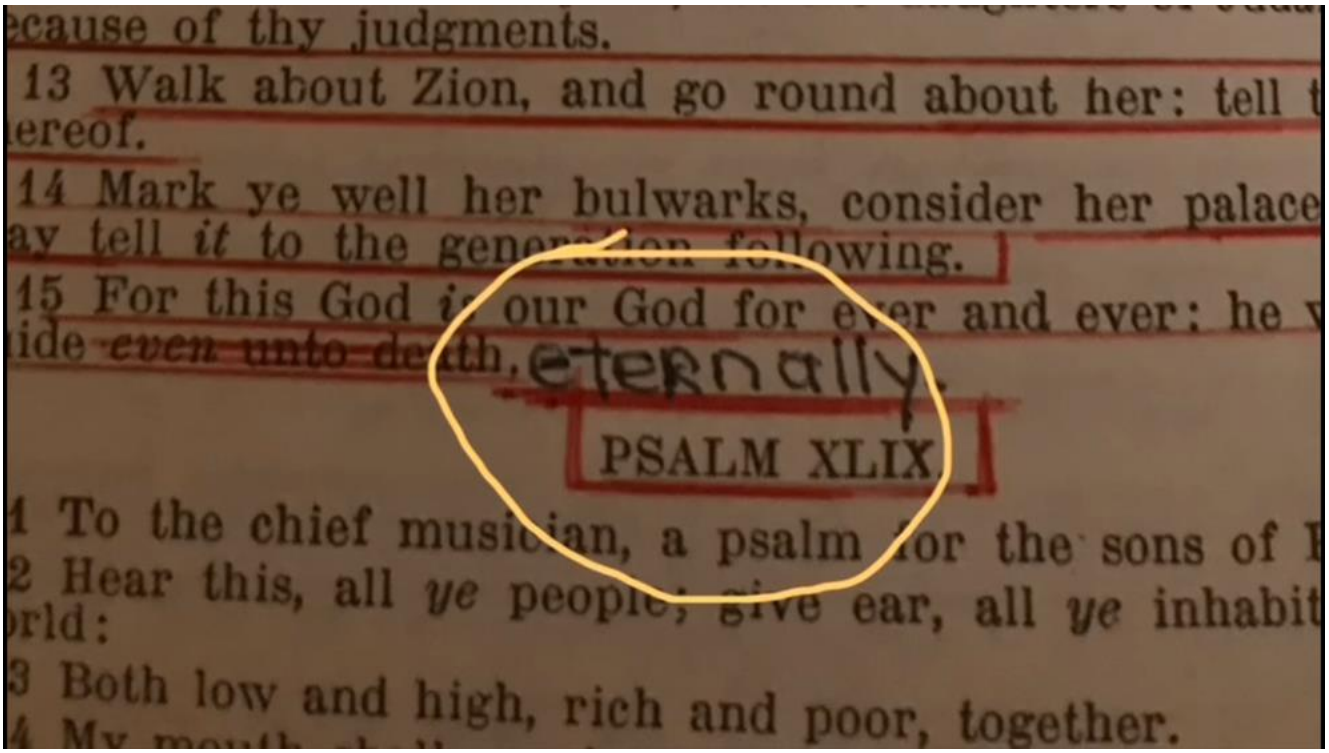
The Ramban answers that Moshe wanted the spies to pay attention to the quality of the Land and bring back a report that will gladden Bnei Yisroel. Why did Moshe want to do that?

The Ramban answers that Moshe wanted Bnei Yisroel to enter Eretz Yisroel with joy! We can learn from Moshe Rabbeinu to always "spy" and find a way to do each mitzva b'simcha!



This past Friday, a wonderful Yid from Canada named Reb Mordechai called me to share with me a truly remarkable story. He just lost his mother about a month ago. On the day that he got up from Shiva, he was going through some of his mother's personal belongings, and he comes across an old English tehillim. His mother couldn't read Hebrew, but it seems like she used to say

tehillim in English. He was going to put it in Sheimos. It was probably not something he would use. But on a whim, he opens it up.



It opens to Kapitul מח, chapter 48, which incidentally was that days yom. And he notices that his mother had underlined and circled many things in the Tehillim. It seems like she had a real personal connection with the Tehillim. But interestingly enough, there's one translation in the Tehillim that she had crossed out and rewritten in her own handwriting.

And that was in the last Pasuk in chapter 48. The Pasuk says like this, 'This is our G-d, He will lead us unto death'. And she had crossed out the words 'unto death', and instead she had scrawled 'eternally'.

And for Reb Mordechai, this was like a hug from Shemayim. He was grieving. He was hurting. He missed his mother. He was in mourning. And his own mother had written, not that Hashem would lead her unto death, but that a Hakadosh Baruch Hu would continue to lead her eternally.

He understood that that was a direct message from Hashem that his mother is eternally bound with HaKadosh Baruch Hu and in his

words - he took that Tehillim home where he hopes to keep it eternally.

Remarkable a person in a difficult spot that gets almost a direct message from HaKadosh Baruch Hu – 'I know you're hurting I know you're in pain, but I got you and your mother is in the best place possible'.



Flashback

Last night, I turn on my phone after Shabbos and there's a message from a woman in Israel. And she shares an absolutely amazing story about her son.

Her son volunteers for Ezer Mitzion, a humanitarian organization in Israel that facilitates the transport of medical supplies, documents, and blood both within Israel and internationally. And sometimes that assistance is not limited to Israel itself, it's even overseas.



She shares that her son gets a message that they need documents picked up from an apartment on Rehov Aronovich in Bnei Brak and then immediately driven to the airport where they have a volunteer that's going to bring them on the next flight to New York so the family will have them some 13, 14 hours later.

He accepts, and agrees to take on the mission, and he drives to Rehov Aronovich in Bnei Brak. He needs to go to the Baruch family,

he needs to knock at their door, pick up the documents, and then speed over to the airport.

The issue is nobody gave him an address. He comes to Rehov Aaronovich. It's a huge street with many apartment buildings with hundreds and hundreds of families, and he has no idea which apartment building. He tries tracking it down, and it's not working. And he starts sweating. He's feeling the pressure. They need this document. It's critical, but he has no idea what to do. So he takes a moment. He calms himself down. He takes a step back. He turns his eyes heavenwards, and he says, 'Rabboino Shel Olam, I want to do this chesed. You've got to help me, please'.

And all of a sudden, at that moment, he has a flashback. 20 plus years earlier. He's a little boy. His mother asked him to go to the Keilim Mikvah, at Rachov Aronovich in Bnei Brak to toivel something. While he's there, he cuts himself on a sharp utensil and he's standing next to the Mikvah and he's bleeding and he's panicking. He's a little kid.

There's a woman standing right behind him. She says, oh, you cut yourself. Come, I live just a few floors above the Keilim Mikvah. Let me bandage you up. Don't worry, it's going to be okay. And he's nervous.

She goes, don't worry. My name is Mrs. Baruch. I live right here. And everyone knows me. Don't worry, you're in good hands. He doesn't know what to do, but he follows her. She takes him up to her apartment and she bandages him. She gives him something to drink. She calms him down and then she takes him back home.

And all of a sudden he remembers that incident. It's Mrs. Baruch on Rechov Aranovich. He finds the building with the Keilim Mikvah. It all comes back to him. He flies up the stairs. He bangs on the door. He gets the documents. He runs back to his vehicle. He speeds over to the airport, and he makes it just in the nick of time for the documents to get on the plane and be delivered in Manhattan.

If you take a step back and you think for a moment, there's two magnificent things that are taking place in the story.

Number one is Mrs. Baruch did an incredible chesed for this little boy. She didn't have to. She didn't have to get involved. Yet she did. And that chesed ended up helping her in her time of need over two decades later.

But here's another amazing thing. Imagine he's a little boy. He's standing there. He's doing the mitzvah. He cuts himself like Ribboino Shel Olam, What are You doing? שְׁלוּחֵי מִצְוָה אֵינָם נִזּוֹקִין ?

The answer is, it wasn't damaging. It wasn't a bad situation. That act of chesed was enabling him to do another incredible act of chesed over two decades later.

The ways of Hashem are truly mysterious, but they're so brilliant.

"When it comes to Avodas Hashem, there is no such a thing as 'I can't." – R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel



A teacher once gave her students an exercise. Imagine this, she said. A ship is sinking. A husband and wife somehow survive and they reach a lifeboat, but there's only one seat left in the boat. The husband jumps in. The wife is left behind in the cold water. Just before the ocean pulls her under, she says her final words to him.



The teacher paused…. "What do you think she said?

The class's answers followed quickly. "I hate you." – 'You're a coward.' – 'How could I have ever loved you?'

Only one boy in the back of the classroom stayed quiet. He stared at his desk, and he didn't look up. 'And you?' the teacher asked gently. 'What do you think?' she said.

Without lifting his eyes, he whispered, 'Take care of our child.'

The room fell completely silent. 'Have you heard this story before?' the teacher asked?

'No', the boy said.

'That's exactly what my mother said to my father before she passed away.'

The class froze. It was a silence deeper than any lesson. The teacher turned toward the window so no one would see the tears forming in the corner of her eyes. – 'Yes', she finally said quietly. 'That's exactly what the woman said.' – The lifeboat sailed away.

The man returned home alone and raised their daughter all by himself.

Years later, after the man had passed away, his daughter found his old diary. On one yellowed page he had written, 'She was already ill. We went on this voyage knowing our time together was short. I wanted to die in her place, but if I died... our daughter would lose both parents. I couldn't take that from her. I had only one choice…, to leave the woman I loved to the sea.'

The classroom was silent. For the first time, many students understood something they had never thought about before.

We're so quick to judge and almost never know the full story because most of the truth lives in the parts people never talk about. So please don't rush to judge.



If you met Binyamin, you would think he's a regular guy. He's got a family, a job, a chavrusa, just a run-in-the-middle fellow. But for those that know, they know that he's so much more. Because Binyamin dedicates his life to assisting widows and orphans.

And one of the areas where he invests his time and efforts is to assure that these children who are fatherless have an opportunity to learn each and every night, to review, to do homework. And he hires and he pays local people to learn with these children. They're so much more than just someone to do homework. They become a confidant. They give the children confidence. - So Binyamin's a special person.

How he pays for it, he himself can't tell you. He's so embarrassed to ask people for money, he barely fund-raises. But somehow people just give him money and there's always money there when he needs to pay the people.

One day there's a knock at his door. He opens up the door, it's a woman. Her husband passed away. She has a bunch of children. She asks if she could speak to him.

He sits her down and she starts to cry. And she says, 'tonight my daughter is supposed to get engaged. But I don't have a penny for anything. Not for the engagement. Not to outfit my daughter, an apartment, a wedding. I have nothing. And if the boy side finds out that I'm penniless, they're not going to want to go ahead. I don't know what to do. I'm at a loss. So I came to you.'

His heart melted and he said to her, don't worry about it. I got it. How much money do you need? She said about $35,000. He says, it's on me. Go ahead with the shiduch. Everything's going to be okay.

The woman walks out the door thanking him, blessing him, benching him. And as soon as she leaves, he thinks, 'what did I just do? I just obligated myself to $35,000. I don't have that money. And I can't ask people for money. I don't know what's going to be.'

My friends, the most incredible thing happens. This widow goes and they set a date for a wedding. It happens to be that the wedding was supposed to take place on a Thursday night when the wedding halls were more available.

About a month or two before the wedding, Binyamin gets a call. He picks up his phone. It's an old friend of his. He says, 'I know you're involved with widows and with orphans. I got a call from an old friend of mine who's very wealthy. He's making a wedding on a Friday. - Go figure. He wants to pay for the wedding of an orphan that's on that very day. Do you know anyone that's getting married on a Friday?'

He says, 'no, people don't get married on Fridays. Would you be okay asking them if Thursday night could work instead? Because people do get married Thursday night.'

He says, 'sure.'

He gets back to him, and he says to him, 'they said, okay, Thursday night works.'

He goes, 'what date?'

He tells him the date, and Binyamin's heart stops. 'It's exactly the date that that orphan girl, that Yesoma, was getting married.'

He tells his friend. 'I got it. I have somebody.'

He says, 'let me get back to the wealthy fellow. How much do you need?'

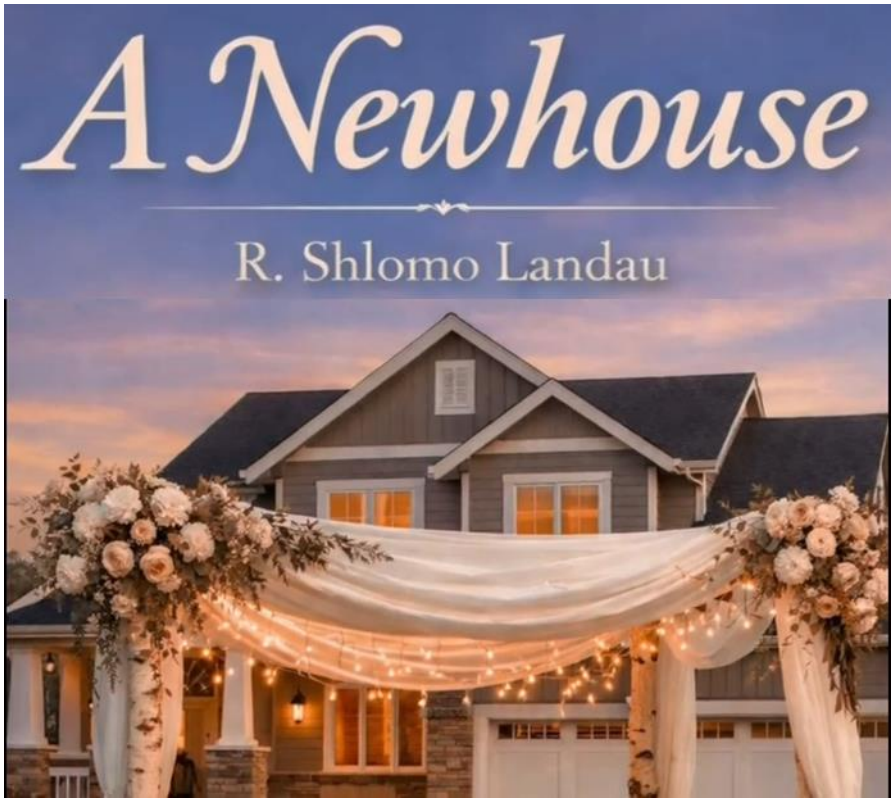
He says, 'between $30,000 and $40,000.'

Two minutes later, he gets a call back. 'It's covered. Everything, preparing, outfitting, the wedding itself, everything taken care of.'

Because you see, when we take care of the Rebbono Shel Olam's children, He makes sure that whatever we need is taken care of as well.

Not What, but How!

If one gives his friend all the gifts in the world with a sour face, he has given him nothing. But one who receives his friend with a cheerful face, even if he has given him nothing else, has given him the greatest gift in the world." ~ **Avos d'Rabbi Nosson**



I want to share with you a crazy story. It's the story of a particular family, in a particular city, in a particular country. Baruch Hashem, they had a large family, and they really need a new house. A house where there's room for everybody, but houses are exorbitant and they're hard to find.

And this family has been davening, praying, begging, pleading from Hashem for a new house for a long time already. They've done shiluach ha-ken, which is a segulah for all kinds of things. It's to get HaKadosh Baruch Hu to get them a new house.

My friends, just recently, Hashem answered their prayers.

No, they're still living in the same house. But you know what happened? Their daughter got engaged.

Now what does that have to do with new house? Here's the kicker. The name of the chossen, their daughter's future name, - **Newhouse!**

You see, HaKadosh Baruch Hu did listen to their tefillas. He always listens to our prayers. Sometimes He gives us the result that we're looking for. And sometimes He says, 'I got you.' And He gives us maybe the result we weren't anticipating.

Mazel Tov to that family on their **Newhouse!** And hey, HaKadosh Baruch Hu could do anything. And **אִם יִרְצֶה הַשֵּׁם** that **Newhouse** will one day be in their new house!



I would like to share something I heard from someone who heard it from the Heilig giant, **Reb Moshe Klerst** that he said over what happened with his own mother.

When he was young, they grew up in Tzefas and at that time the Arabs were circling the town. There was a tremendous poverty. There was tremendous hunger. And he had a very choshve father, Rabbi Meir Klerst, who was married to a very big tzedeikus.

She had connections, and she managed to smuggled in a loaf of bread, which was a gold mine at the time. She was so excited that she could feed her family of nine little kids and her husband.

Just when she put the bread on the kitchen table, there was a knock on the door. She opened the door, and there was a Yid there weeping and crying. He was as white as a sheet. And he said, I heard that you have some food. I didn't eat. I didn't drink for three days and three nights. I feel like I'm passing out.

He lifted up his trousers. His feet were swollen. Do you have anything for me to eat?

She was a big tzadeikus and she told him, look, I have a little bread. Here's a knife. Cut yourself a few slices. Of course, I'll give you. And out of sensitivity, so that he should feel comfortable, she left the kitchen.

She waited for him to finish up. It took too long. She walked into the kitchen, and she realized that he's finishing up the last few drops. He ate the entire loaf!

She was devastated. She was horrified.

This was literally the life of her children and her husband. She wanted to shriek and yell, how could you do it to me? How can you repay me for a favor like that? - And when she wanted to yell at him, at that moment, she said to herself, why would you make him uncomfortable? It's done, the bread is not here. She bit her lips, she controlled herself, and she didn't tell him one word.

Two years later, she fell ill. She was on a deathbed. And her family and her husband were surrounding her bed. They called a minyan. And it was clear to everyone that she's passing away.

All of a sudden, she woke up and she said, 'The judgment was for me to leave the world. I started crying and pleading. Please, I have a husband. I have nine children that are dependent on me. Please give me another chance of life.' - But the decree came out that I should be dead. And at that moment, I was dead.

But all of a sudden, I saw an angel of mercy coming running and saying, I was created from that episode, that event, when she bit her lips and she didn't say one word to hurt this poor person who ate up all her bread. I need mercy for her. And at that moment, everything turned over. And the decree went out that she should come back down and get a chance to live again. And she woke up and she was well and she had many years.

The message is, there's so many times that we feel we're so right, it's so unfair, it's so unjust, and we have so much to say, and we want to shriek, we want to yell, we want to speak.

Here's your opportunity to create for yourself and for your children an angel of mercy that you never know when you'll need it. Bite your lips, control yourself, hold back your words. It's so powerful. It brings mercy, it brings rachamim for you, for your family, for always and ever, for Klal Yisrael.



Rabbi Hershele Spinker had a devoted chassid who lived in London, a man of great wealth. When Rabbi Hershele first became Rebbe, this wealthy chassid came to the Rebbe and he told him, Rebbe, don't worry about any expenses for your family, Simchas. I'll take care of everything, bar mitzvahs, weddings for your children, for your grandchildren. It's all on me.

True to his word, when the Rebbe made his first bar mitzvah, a generous check arrived in the mail with a note that read, this should cover the night of the bar mitzvah, the kiddush on Shabbos, the clothing, the tefillin, even the tefillin bag. - The Rebbe was overjoyed.

A few months passed and this *gevir* is waiting there in London to receive a thank you note from the Rebbe. But nothing came. He reasoned, Rebbe's are busy. I'll give it some more time.

A year went by, still nothing. Every day he went to check his mailbox for the note. Nothing. And now he was upset. He told his family, I'm done with the Rebbe. I'm not giving him any more money for his Simchas. All I want is a simple thank you. Is that too much to ask? From then on, he stopped sending money to the Rebbe.

Fast forward 70 years. In 2023, a man by the name of Reb Moshe Hershkowitz, a dealer in Antiques Forum, bought a sefer called Imre Yosef from the first Spinker Rebbe. He bought it home. He opened up the sefer. He leafed through it. And all of a sudden, an old

envelope fell out of the sefer. And inside, there was a letter handwritten by Rabbi Heschel himself!

Addressed to that same gevir in London, it was the most eloquent, the most heartfelt letter. – *'You cannot imagine the burden you've lifted from me by covering the expenses of the Bar Mitzvah. Thank you from the depths of my heart. May you and your family be blessed with health and wealth and much, much nachas.'*

It was sealed and stamped, but somehow it never made it into the mailbox. It was stuck in that safe for 70 years. Moshe Hershkowitz did not recognize the name on the envelope. He had long fallen off the radar. After some research, they discovered that this gevir had passed away, but his son was still alive.

When they showed him the letter, his son started to cry. He said, my father spent his entire life saying the Rebbe was ungrateful. 'The Rebbe never thanked me'. He went to his grave believing that the Rebbe was a פְּפוּי טוֹבָה - ungrateful. Had he known about this letter, he would have continued supporting the Rebbe his entire life.

How many times in our own lives do we make the same mistake? We assume, we speak, we label. We say, he doesn't appreciate me. She doesn't care about me. But we don't know the entire story.

Let this story remind us that our words matter. They can build and they can destroy. Before we speak critically of others, we must pause and think, maybe I don't know everything. Maybe there's a letter that got stuck between the pages.

You Stumbled This Morning?

"You stumbled this morning and spoke the forbidden? Then strengthen yourself once more and succeed in the afternoon." ~ **Chofetz Chaim**.



At a Chassunah about 15 years ago the grandfather of the kallah Rabbi Diskin got up and he said, I want to make a speech.

Rabbi Diskin recounted a formative episode from his youth shortly after World War II. At that time, he was attending Yeshiva Chaim Berlin in America, a period when the importance of staying in yeshiva (Jewish religious school) was not widely recognized by the broader community. Rabbi Diskin highlights that maintaining a connection to yeshiva was crucial for preserving Jewish identity; those who left often assimilated, sometimes marrying outside the faith and losing their Jewish identity altogether.

During a difficult phase of study, feeling discouraged and uncertain if he should continue, Rabbi Diskin decided to leave the yeshiva. While on a train heading home, a fellow student approached him and said a single line: "***Diskin, you look like you're learning great***."

This brief, positive comment provided a pivotal moment of encouragement that altered Rabbi Diskin's outlook. He reconsidered, returned to yeshiva, continued his studies through high school, and became deeply committed to his religious path. This commitment extended to his family, with his children and grandchildren also becoming devoted to Torah study.

And today, my granddaughter is getting married. He says, you know what's so powerful about that story? - The man who came over to me that day was Mr. Lobenstein. Mr. Lobenstein is the grandfather of the Chatan!

Rabbi Diskin emphasizes the **extraordinary power of a single positive remark**, noting that Mr. Lobenstein likely had no memory of the comment from 40 years ago that changed a life but that its ripple effects are celebrated today through the marriage of our grandchildren. The emotional and spiritual significance of such moments is difficult to convey but undeniably potent.

This contrasts with the negative impact of unspoken or behind-the-back criticism, especially in environments where trust and safety are expected. People who discover they have been negatively discussed often feel vulnerable, defeated, and isolated, undermining their confidence and sense of security. Conversely, positive words foster strength, upliftment, and a sense of belonging.

The overarching message is that **words truly matter**—a single positive comment can have life-changing effects, and fostering an environment of encouragement and support is essential for personal growth and communal well-being.



After-Life Experience

Rabbi Yitzchok Caller, founder of Ohel Pessel, attended a recent *shivah* call where one of the *aveilim* shared an incredible story — one that illustrates how the *zechuyos* a person accumulates during his lifetime can continue to grow even after he leaves this world.

For many years, Reb Shalom quietly supported a friend who was struggling financially. Each month, Reb Shalom would gently inquire how much was needed, and then, with a warm smile, cover the remainder.

It wasn't that Reb Shalom was a man of means; he wasn't. But he was a man of heart — and through that heart, he somehow managed to raise the necessary funds.

When Reb Shalom passed away, his own family was obviously left devastated. But for his friend's family, the loss carried another painful meaning as well. How would they survive without Reb Shalom's assistance?

For some time after Reb Shalom's passing, they tried to budget themselves as best as they could. But as the months came and went, the bills kept piling up. The electric bill was close to maxing out. The water was on the verge of being shut off.



In desperation, his friend decided to visit Reb Shalom's *kever*. Perhaps — just perhaps — there was still a way to plead for help. A long-distance transfer, he thought. One final appeal.

As he stood there davening, he was astonished to see…Reb Shalom's son approaching the *kever*.

"Shalom, R' Yitzchok," the friend said to Reb Shalom's son. "What brings you out here? It's not your father's *yohrzeit*."

R' Yitzchok looked at him in surprise. "That's exactly my question to you. I wasn't expecting to find anyone standing by my father's grave today."

The friend explained, "Well, the truth is that your father supported me month after month. Now that he's gone, I have no one to help me cover my expenses. I came here hoping — maybe — that he could somehow continue his generosity."

R' Yitzchok listened quietly. Then he said, "Let me tell you something — that shook me entirely.

"This morning, very early, I received a frantic phone call from my sister. She told me that she had a vivid dream in which she saw our father. He asked her to tell me to go to his grave — today.

"I couldn't dismiss her words. This afternoon, after taking care of something time-sensitive, I got into the car, made the hour-and-a-half drive, and came here."

R' Yitzchok paused.

"Now I understand," he said softly. "My father sent me here. He was no longer able to do the *chessed* himself, so he returned to this world to make sure that his mission continued."

From that day on, R' Yitzchok took the burden upon himself. He followed in his father's footsteps, sustaining the family and carrying forward Reb Shalom's legacy of quiet *chessed*.

A person may leave this world — but the good he planted continues to act, to give, and to find its way forward.

The Ohr HaChaim Hakodosh

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת עַל־כַּנְפֵי בִגְדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתְנוּ עַל־צִיצִת הַכָּנָף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת '***Speak to the Children of Israel, and tell them that they should make themselves fringes on the borders of their garments throughout their generations***'. 15:38

The Ohr Hachaim explains the letter **ו** at the beginning of the word **ועשו**. The Ohr Hachaim quotes a Medrash that explains the Mitzvah of Tzitzis and its juxtaposition to the previous Parsha of the Mekoshesh – the one who gathered wood on Shabbos.

After the story with the Mekoshesh, Moshe davened to Hashem. He told Him that Klal Yisroel was in a difficult position, because they didn't have anything to protect them from Aveiros on Shabbos. During the week, Klal Yisroel wore Tefillin all day, reminding them that they should not forget about Hashem and His commandments.

On Shabbos, they did not wear Tefillin, and they could forget about Hashem. He blamed the Aveira on this lack of reminder.

In answer, Hashem commanded them with the Mitzvah of Tzitizis, that applies even on Shabbos. When a person wears Tzitzis, he is always reminded of Hashem and His Mitzvos, as the possuk tells us - **למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי**. This will prevent a re-occurrence of the Mekoshesh.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that a person may think that he only has to wear Tzitzis on Shabbos, on the day that he is missing Tefillin and needs another reminder of Hashem. During the week, when he is wearing Tefillin, he may not need to wear Tzitzis. One would think that he has a choice whether to wear Tefillin or Tzitzis, as long as he reminds himself of Hashem and His Torah.

The possuk tells us, with the **ו**, that the Mitzvah of Tzitzis is in addition to something else. The Mitzvah of Tefillin is applicable, and he should also fulfil the Mitzvah of Tzitzis. He has no choice between the two.

The Ohr Hachaim then explains the word **לדרתם** – to your generations. This Mitzvah is to serve as a reminder to all of the Mitzvos every time someone looks at them. A person may think that a pure and holy generation may arise that is exempt from this Mitzvah, because they are so great and will not forget about the Mitzvos. The Torah tells us that all generations need to keep the Mitzvah of Tzitzis, even those not at risk of forgetting the Torah.

The Ohr Hachaim adds that the word **לדרתם** is written in the middle of the Parsha, not at the beginning or the end. First the Torah tells us that we should wear Tzitzis on the fringes of our clothing, for all our generations, and then we are told to wear a blue string.

The Torah is hinting to us that only part of the Mitzvah is applicable to all generations. We always need to wear the white strings on our clothing, but sometimes we have to wear blue too. The white strings

are a permanent Mitzvah, the blue ones are not. Hashem was already planning on hiding Techeiles from us in the golus, and nowadays we only have the white strings.



כִּי־חָזָק הוּא, מִמֶּנּוּ: (יג/לא) כִּבְיָכוֹל כְּלַפֵּי מַעְלָה אָמְרוּ (רש״י) - [For he is stronger than us /and רש״י explains כביכול they were saying that the גוים are stronger than Hashem]

Asks the חפץ חיים: How can someone say such a ridiculous statement? Did they really think that the גוים were ח״ו stronger than ה'? Can't ה' destroy the whole world in one second?

The חפץ חיים explains that this is one of the sly tricks which the יצר הרע has up his sleeves. He makes a person become depressed by thinking, 'Who am I? I am not a צדיק - I can't achieve much. All these מצות and מדרגות are made for more חשוב'ער people. The יצר הרע tries to lower a person and dishearten him.

That is what happened with the מרגלים. They said, 'We saw such a wonderful land but the nations living there are strong and mighty. One needs great זכויות in order to be worthy that ה' should make a נס and overpower the nations. Who are we? We have just done the עגל and are steeped in תאוות, as we saw by the meat. We are not great enough that נסים should be done for us.'

That is what they meant by saying that ח״ו the גוים are stronger than ה' : הקב״ה won't make a נס for such inferior people as us.

However, יהושע וכלב told them, 'No! You are wrong! ה' does not only help the greatest צדיקים! Rather, if we try our best and do not purposefully go against the תורה (as כלב told them), then ה' will perform ישועות for us.

בְּמִסְפַּר הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר־תַּרְתֶּם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ, אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם—יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה... (יד/לד)

[Like the number of days that you spied out the land, 40 days, a day for a year, a day for a year] They were punished and had to stay in the **מדבר** for 40 years due to the 40 days. Each year was punishment for one day. This is equal to 12 months for 24 hours and each **חודש** corresponds to 2 hours.

The **אידן** left **מצרים** on the 15th of **ניסן** and entered **ארץ ישראל** on the 10th of **ניסן**, which means that their punishment was 4 days less than 40 years. The journey from **הר סיני** to **ארץ ישראל** usually takes 11 days, as the **פסוק** writes **אחד עשר יום מחורב** and so cannot be reckoned as part of the punishment. This means that the punishment of forty years was 15 days short.

רש״י at the beginning of the **סדרה** of **שלח** writes: **אותה שעה כשרים היו**—at that hour (the first hour of the mission) the **מרגלים** were **צדיקים**. For that hour they were not punished. 1 hour corresponds to a half a month (15 days). (**ט״א/פני אריה**)

וַיַּיִן לַנֶּסֶךְ רְבִיעִית הַהִין (טו/ה)



After the **פרשה** of the **מרגלים** the **תורה** writes the **פרשה** of **נסכים**. [That is the **מצוה** to bring wine with **קרבנות** (**שלמים**) and **עולה**).] What is the connection between these two **פרשיות**?

Rebbe Chaim Kanievski zt'l gives an amazing answer based on a fascinating **מדרש** which states: From where did the **אידן** obtain wine

for **נסכים** during the years they were in the **מדבר**? - For all of those years, they used wine made from the bunch of grapes that the **מרגלים** brought back from **ארץ ישראל**.

With this **מדרש**, says Rebbe Chaim, we can now understand why the **פרשה** of **נסכים** is written after the **פרשה** of the **מרגלים**.

Rebbe Gavriel Knopfler שליט"א the **ראש ישיבה** of **שערי תורה** asks on the above **מדרש**; why would the **אידן** use wine for the **נסכים** that was produced from the grapes that the **מרגלים** brought - after all the reason that the **מרגלים** brought the grapes was in order to slander?

Rabbi Gavriel answers that after many years he found a Zohar **(חלק ג דף קכ ע"ב)** that writes; the 10 **מרגלים** tried to take the bunch of grapes but it would not budge. However, when **יהושע** and **כלב** tried to move it, it moved and they carried it.

With this the **זוהר** explains the **פסוק** that writes **וַיִּשְׂאֻהוּ בַּמּוֹט, בִּשְׁנָיִם**—they carried it on the pole with two, [the simple **פשט** is that they used two sticks] -can be interpreted that the two of them [i.e. **יהושע** and **כלב**] carried it.

Says Rebbe Gavriel **שליט"א** that it must be that this **מדרש** holds like that **זוהר**: that **יהושע וכלב** brought the grapes and there were no bad intentions involved. (heard from Reb D. Rebenwurzel)

וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת ה' (טו/לט)

The **משנה ברורה** in **סימן ח ס"ק כה** writes that from the **פסוק** of **וראיתם אתו** we learn out that your **ציצית** should be visible. The **חפץ חיים** goes on to ask those who are embarrassed to have the **ציצית** noticeable; "If one would receive a medal from a king on which is engraved the king's name, wouldn't he be tremendously proud of it and make sure that it is always on display and visible to all? How much more so with the **ציצית**, on which there is a **רמז** of the name of **ה'**, we should be proud of them [and display them]."

This is an incredible story that took place over 500 years ago. It was recorded in the **ספר משיבת נפש** as this story took place with the author himself:

Rebbe Yochanan Luria **זצ"ל**, one of the **גדולים** of Germany, had a meeting with a very high-ranki-ng officer in Strasbourg. He writes: As it was the law at the time that all Jews had to wear a yellow band, I was also wearing the band. While I was there a **גלאך** approached and asked me "can you explain to me the purpose and meaning of your yellow band?"

I replied, "That is the law. I don't know any reason behind it."

The **גלאך** responded, "Then I will explain it to you. You are the chosen nation by Hashem, and as you are not involved in **מצוות** at all times you were given two signs -one a hidden sign and one a public sign - that should act as constant reminders at all times. The hidden sign is **ברית מילה** and the exposed sign is the **ציצית**. Whenever anyone asks you why you wear your **ציצית** you reply it is a command from Hashem, and thereby you are constantly reminded of your duty to G-d as a nation. However, recently, you **אידן** have started to feel embarrassed about this sign, and even worse you try to dress in the styles of the non-Jews. Therefore, your Hashem caused that you will now have to wear these ridiculing bands that have no meaning whatsoever."

As I was wearing my **ציצית** beneath my clothes I pulled them out and showed them to him.

His comment was, "That's not good enough. They have to be visible for all to see." (**טללי אורות**)

It is **ברוך השם** such a wonderful sight to see how many of us are proud to have **ציצית** and always have them proudly displayed.

Let's see how fortunate and lucky we are that we are **ב"ה** able to fulfil such a great **מצוה** with such ease and let us appreciate every minute that we wear our **ציצית**.

When the Vilna **גאון** was laying on his deathbed he was crying, those around him asked him why he was crying. He replied, "In this world for a few coins one can buy a **מצוה** through which one merits to be **מקבל פני השכינה**. However, in **עולם הבא** even if I pay with all my **עולם הבא**, I will not have the ability to do one more **מצוה**."

When asked to which **מצוה** he was referring to he replied, '**ציצית**' as the **גמרא מנחות (מג:)** writes: **ורבי שמעון בר יוחאי אומר כל הזהיר במצוה זו זוכה ומקבל פני שכינה** .

After the Second World War, the Klausenberger Rebbe would travel to the D.P. camps in order to encourage the survivors. One day he arrived at the camp holding a package of four pairs of **ציצית**. About 150 **איזן** crowded around, all pleading for the privilege of having one of the precious garments. The rebbe told them that the only way to decide who should get one is to make a **גורל**.

Suddenly, one young **בחור** by the name of Mendel Pershitik approached the Rebbe and proclaimed, "I deserve the **ציצית** more than anyone else -even without a **גורל**.

The Rebbe asked, "Why are you better than everyone else?"

The **בחור** took his shirt and tore it in such a way that it had four corners, and then said, "Look, I am the only one who has a **חיוב מדאורייתא** to put **ציצית** on my shirt.

The Rebbe was awestruck. Here was a **בחור** who had lost his family during the war and suffered immensely, and now all his worry was how to obtain a pair of **ציצית**.

The rebbe wanted to give him a pair, but he said, "I have already announced that we will be making a **גורל** but if you mean it **לשם שמים** I am sure you will be picked out from the **גורל**."

And guess whose name was picked out? Mendel Pershitik. (**יגדיל תורה**)

בס"ד

למודי משה

Glass Half Full/Glass Half Empty



One of the lessons of the *meraglim* is that there are only two kinds of people in this world: The person who sees the glass half full and the person who sees the glass half empty. The ten *meraglim* who came back with the negative report were unfortunately people who saw the glass half empty. They brought back an extraordinarily large cluster of grapes, which could be viewed in one of two ways: What a lush land this is! It is going to be easy to farm. It is going to be easy to make a living here. Look at this wonderful place! Or, "The people must be giants because why on earth would the fruit be so big?"

When the Ribbono Shel Olam made it happen that the locals were busy burying the dead so that they would be preoccupied and not notice the *meraglim*, that too could be viewed in one of two ways: Look at the favor the Ribbono Shel Olam did for us!" Or, "Everyone drops dead over here. What kind of land is this?" This is the classic "glass half empty/glass half full" dichotomy.

I saw a famous story in the *sefer Me'orei Ohr*, describing an incident that occurred post-World War II, in one of the Displaced Persons camps. Rabbi Eliezer Silver, *zt"l*, who as part of the *Vaad Hatzalah* went around Europe in his U.S. Army uniform, came to Mauthausen, where there were Jewish Holocaust survivors. He wanted to make a *minyan* and had nine people.

There was one Jewish survivor, who refused to join the *minyan*. Rabbi Silver tried to convince him to help make the *minyan*. The fellow told Rabbi Silver, "I will never again in my life *daven* or pick up a *siddur*."

He explained his bitterness to the Rabbi: When he was in the concentration camp, there was a Jew who smuggled in a *siddur*, from which he would *daven*. He would then "rent" his *siddur* to the other prisoners of the concentration camp. The "rent" he charged to use his *siddur* was that those who wanted to *daven* had to give him their bread rations for the day. This bitter Jew told Rabbi Silver "When I saw a Jew that could stoop so low that he would make others forgo their meagre rations in order to use his *siddur*, I decided that I don't want to have anything to do with *davening* or with a *siddur* or with such a religion for the rest of my life."

Rav Eliezer Silver said to this Jew: Why do you look at the Jew that rented out the *siddur* for a ration of bread? Why do you not, instead, look at the Jews who were willing to give up their rations of bread in order to *daven*? The bitter Jew conceded that Rav Silver was right. He decided to help complete the *minyan*.

Years later, this story was told over by the famous Nazi hunter, Simon Wiesenthal, at a conference of European rabbis, at which the rabbinical group presented Simon Wiesenthal with an award upon reaching his 91st birthday. When Wiesenthal finished the story, he delivered the punchline: "I was that bitter Jew whom Rabbi Silver convinced to join the *minyan*."

This is one of the many lessons of the *meraglim*: The glass is either half full or half empty. In general, people who have the capacity to look at the glass as half full live happier lives. Other people don't live as happy lives. This lesson is summed up by the *pasuk*: "…And you shall see the good of Yerushalayim all the days of your life." (*Tehillim* 128:5) (R' Frand)

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - Rebbe Shimon's Baby

My story begins seventeen years ago, when I got married and, like everyone, anticipated having children. I dreamed of a messy house, piles of laundry and dishes in the sink, going to the playground with a whole procession of children following me, and chocolate-spread sandwiches. But the house remained quiet, always neat and perfectly clean. One year passed and another, and still we waited. Throughout the years, we tried segulos, brachos, treatments, and anything possible, with no success.

After about eight years, my husband's friend suggested that he go with him to Rav Shimon Charari zt'l, to get a brachah for children.

They traveled together to the rav, who was seeing people in Tel Aviv. My husband went into the rav, sat down, and told him about our difficulties. The rav asked, "Where's your wife?"

"At home..." my husband replied. The rav asked him to call the following day and that I participate in a conference call with him.

The next day, we called the rav. From the start of the conversation, I had the feeling of a loving, caring, concerned father. I told him about my difficulty, and the rav said to me, "My daughter, there's a reason in Heaven why Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not giving you children. Accept upon yourself something that you don't have to do, and that way Hakadosh Baruch Hu will give you what He doesn't have to."

Then, the rav asked me if I cover my hair, and I answered, "Of course. Fully." He then asked, "Do you cover your hair when you're sleeping at night too?" I responded in the negative.

"What do you say about covering your hair when you go to sleep?"

I immediately replied that it's hard for me. What, to have my hair covered all day with no break? It sounded too difficult.

"I don't want an answer from you now," the rav said. "Think about it, and get back to me in another week."

"Okay," I replied.

A week later, we called the rav again.

"I thought about it, and I'm prepared to have a tichel on all day. In the evening, when I go to sleep, I'll put my tichel on the night table beside me, and as soon as I wake up, I'll put it back on."

"No," the rav said, "I want you to wear a tichel when you sleep too."

Once again, I answered that it was too hard for me and I couldn't, and once again, the rav said, "Think about it and get back to me."

This happened in Iyar, close to Lag B'Omer. On Lag B'Omer, my husband suggested that I go with him to Meron. He had been going each year, but I had never gone along.

Nothing could have prepared me for the scene there... It was crowded, there were tons of people, singing and dancing, and incredible joy.

We walked toward the kever, and then my husband said, "Now's the time! Let's take an hour for ourselves and daven with our whole hearts."

I felt like I didn't have the strength to daven, request, and cry again. I was not in the right mood and had no interest in anything.

I parted from my husband and headed for the women's section.

Naturally, it was impossible to enter, so I stood in a corner, doing nothing. I simply stood there and watched everyone. I had an hour to kill.

A few minutes later, a woman turned to me and handed me a siddur. "Tzaddekes, do you want to daven Minchah?" I responded politely that I didn't, thank you.

"Maybe you will anyway?" she tried again.

"Okay." I took the siddur and started to daven Minchah.

From that moment, I experienced something that I never had before. Time stopped, everything around me fell silent, and I didn't hear a thing. It was just me, the siddur, my tears, and the Master of the World. I spent almost an hour on Shemoneh Esrei. A river of tears flowed from my eyes. It was an accumulation of years of holding back.

"Creator of the World, please, I also want to merit being a mother! I also want a child of my own! I'm begging You, King of the world..."

I cried and cried without stopping, wetting the siddur and myself with my tears, not noticing what was going on around me at all.

From amidst all my crying and pain, I cried out, "Creator of the World, I'm wholeheartedly accepting upon myself what Rav Charari asked of me. I'll cover my hair when I'm sleeping too. I'll come here in another year with a child of my own! That child will be two months old! And I'll call him Shimon after Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai! I promise to come here in another year to give thanks and to publicize my miracle!" I stopped. I felt as if Someone above had made a green check mark on my back.

I met my husband, who didn't understand what happened to me. My eyes were red and swollen, and I was in a completely different world. I didn't tell him anything yet. When we got into the car, I asked him for a pen and paper and wrote, "Today, 18 Iyar, Lag B'Omer, I have accepted upon myself to 1. Cover my hair when I'm sleeping at night. 2. Come to give thanks in another year with my son, and he'll be two months old. 3. Call him Shimon." - I folded the paper and said to my husband, "I'll show you what I wrote in another year."

Two weeks later, we went for another treatment, but it didn't work. Another two weeks passed. We were waiting to start another treatment, but suddenly I began to feel weak and nauseous. It's just

psychological, I told myself. The next day, I did a test and discovered that I was expecting. Naturally. Shock!

Needless to say, when we informed the specialist who was treating us, he didn't believe it.

We called Rav Charari and said, "I'm expecting."

"I didn't do anything. It was all the Creator of the World," the rav answered with modesty and simplicity, as if he had nothing to do with it at all.

Nine months passed. I gave birth ten days late, on 18 Adar II, our ninth anniversary, and the day before what would turn out to be the yahrtzeit of Rav Shimon Charari.

We went to Meron on Lag B'Omer that year with Shimon, just as I promised. He was exactly two months old. We went to give thanks. I stood in the same place, with a carriage and a baby. Dreaming and not believing. Endless, uncontrollable tears and emotions. Tears that came from a different place, tears of joy. The feeling of a loving Father. It was just as I had made up a year earlier. I looked Heavenward and said, "Thank You, Abba. Thank You, Creator of the World." Passersby didn't understand. A woman, a carriage, a baby, tears.

When we tried to leave, there was terrible crowding, packed buses, and everyone was pushing and trying to catch a place. We didn't manage to push our way on a bus, especially not with a carriage. People said to me, "Who brings such a small baby here? You're putting his life in danger."

"This is Rebbe Shimon's baby," I replied, "and if you knew the story behind this child, you'd understand."

It took us almost five hours to get onto a bus, but we were so happy that nothing bothered us.

My message in this story is that if you give the Creator what you don't have to, He'll give you the world. Today, it's natural for me to sleep with my head covered, something the rav saw and understood, but I didn't know. Since I started covering my hair at night, I have a feeling of obligation to Hashem, and my tznius has improved.

One small kabbalah changed my entire life.

May my story be l'ilui nishmas Rav Shimon Charari, zt"l, and if I've strengthened you even a little, daven for us for zera shel kayama: Sivan bas Hadassah and Moshe ben Shoshana.



Inspired by Time - Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

In our generation, one of the most pressing and painful struggles is the challenge of chinuch. Whether within the walls of our schools, our yeshivos, or our own homes, there is often a profound sense of confusion, difficulty, and even discouragement. We find ourselves asking: How do we raise our children? How should we truly see them? How do we relate to them with the proper perspective?

This week's parsha offers a remarkable and deeply penetrating insight into this very dilemma.

The Torah recounts the episode involving Miriam speaking to Aharon regarding Moshe. Although her intentions were refined, there was a subtle lack of respect, and as a result, she was punished with tzaraas—inflicted l'eynei kol Yisrael. It was a moment of immense embarrassment and a severe punishment.

And yet, immediately afterward, the Torah reveals something striking:

The entire nation did not travel until Miriam was brought back. Millions of people—men, women, and children—remained encamped for seven full days, waiting for one individual. Why?

Chazal reveal that this was a reward for something Miriam had done many years earlier. When Moshe was placed in the river as a baby, Miriam stood at a distance, watching, waiting, and caring to see what would happen to him. For those few moments of concern, she was rewarded midah k'neged midah—the entire Klal Yisrael waited for her.

But the proportions seem difficult to grasp. The time Miriam waited was brief—perhaps only minutes. The time Klal Yisrael waited was seven full days. Chazal explain that this is a five-hundredfold reward.

Reb Uren Reich asks a further question: Even if we understand the ratio of time, how do we understand the scale? Miriam was one individual, yet now an entire nation, hundreds of thousands of people, were made to wait for her. Where is the proportionality?

The answer is that Miriam was not simply watching a baby.

When she stood by the river, she did not see a helpless child in a basket. She lived with a clear inner awareness, a certainty, that this child would one day be the redeemer of Israel. In her mind and heart, she was not looking at one infant; she was looking at the future leader of an entire nation, a person whose value would be equivalent to all of Klal Yisrael.

Her act of waiting was not for "one." It was, in her perception, for six hundred thousand.

And therefore, the reward she received was perfectly aligned. Six hundred thousand people waited for her because that is how she had viewed the one she cared for.

This is the greatness of a truly great leader: not to see only what is presently visible, but to see what it will become. They do not relate

to potential as something abstract or distant; they view it as a present reality.

And this is the profound mussar for us.

In the world of chinuch, it is all too easy to look at a child and see only what is in front of us—immaturity, distraction, or disturbance. It is easy to dismiss, to minimize, or to underestimate.

But the Torah is teaching us to look deeper.

A child is not just a child. A child is a future. A child is a possibility. A child may one day become a person of immense greatness, of profound impact, and of towering stature. If we would truly internalize this—if we would train ourselves to see potential as reality—our entire approach would change. The way we speak, the way we react, the way we invest, and the way we believe would be transformed.

Miriam teaches us that how you see a neshamah determines how you relate to it—and ultimately, what it will become.

The Weekly Vort

■ **ארץ אכלת יושביה היא** ***…it is a land that devours its inhabitants*** (13:32). *Wherever the spies went, they saw funerals. They failed to understand it was G-d's way of diverting the local residents' attention away from them* (Rashi).

The Kotzker Rebbe asks why their report was considered a sin, if they were only reporting what they actually saw?

He explains: Truth is not only what one sees. Obviously one who relates things he did not see with his own eyes is a liar, but the definition of truth is not merely relating what one visually witnesses. When faced with an occurrence that appears to contradict G-d's word, a man of truth makes every effort to resolve the issue in a

way which allows him to perceive the Divine truth. The spies saw what appeared to be reality to them. They should have defined reality in terms of G-d's will. (The Torah Treasury)

PARSHAS SHELACH

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Living For His Honour

Moshe's Proposal

In Parshas Shelach, after the sin of the meraglim and the people who listened to them, we read what Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe Rabbeinu: עַד אָנָה יְנַאֲצֵנִי הָעָם הַזֶּה – How long will this people vex Me? וְעַד אָנָה לֹא יַאֲמִינוּ בִי – How long will they fail to believe in Me, בְּכֹל הָאֹתוֹת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי בְּקִרְבּוֹ – despite all the signs that I performed in its midst? And therefore, אַכֶּנּוּ בַדֶּבֶר וְאוֹרִשֶׁנּוּ – I will smite the entire nation with a plague and I'll wipe them out. And how will I fulfill My promise to Avraham that his children will become a great nation? Through you, Moshe, וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אוֹתְךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם מִמֶּנּוּ – From you I will begin again and make you a great nation, even greater than they are now (Bamidbar 14:11-12).

At that time, Moshe Rabbeinu proposed an idea which we're going to study tonight. He said to Hashem (ibid. 13-19), "When the Egyptians will hear that You took this people out from among them and You destroyed them, so they will say, 'It's because the Hashem of the Hebrews, when His nation began to approach the land of Canaan and He saw how fortified the land was, how difficult it was in undertaking to conquer all those nations, so He backed out. And therefore in order to be free from His promise, He destroyed His people.' So now Hashem, because of Your honor, You should retract Your decree and You should stand by us forever. Otherwise, it will be a blemish on Your great Name."

Do It For Your Sake

So Moshe Rabbeinu at that time proposed a principle of kevod Shamayim. It's the honor of Hashem that the Am Yisroel should be allowed to persist. וְעַתָּה יִגְדַּל נָא כֹּחַ ה׳ – And now, Moshe said, let Your power become increased when everyone will see that despite whatever we have done, still You're willing to forgive us. You'll still maintain Your love for us despite what You say that we did, then that's going to be יִגְדַּל נָא כֹּחַ ה׳ – there will be a greater honor for Hashem.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu listened to that. וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ סָלַחְתִּי כִּדְבָרֶךָ – I forgive as you have spoken. I will let the nation live according to your proposal (ibid. 20).

Moshe's Test

Now I must make a note before I go on. Hakadosh Baruch Hu never intended to destroy the Jewish people. What He did was merely a test for Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe was offered now that the entire nation would come directly from him instead of merely from Avraham Avinu; it would be a new nation built on his descendants. A tremendous honor forever and ever! The eternal people will look back to the founder, Moshe Rabbeinu. A glory unequaled!

But Moshe Rabbeinu rose to the occasion and he refused to yield. He said, "No, I want You to maintain Your promise to protect our nation as they are today. Because that's the greatest honor for You. More than the honor You'll have from making a new people out of me, when people will see that You are loyal to Your promise — You promised to take us out of Mitzrayim and bring us to Eretz Canaan and that we should be Your nation forever — and You kept Your word, that's going to be the greatest honor for Hashem and therefore that's what I want."

Now, we have to understand what took place then. It's true that for Moshe Rabbeinu it was an opportunity for greatness of character; it was a test and he passed with flying colors. Like a navy ship returning from battle with its colors, its flag, raised high as a sign of victory,

that's how Moshe Rabbeinu left this encounter with Hakadosh Baruch Hu — he was victorious in passing the test.

The More Important Test

But there's something that resulted from this whole story that is even more important than Moshe Rabbeinu. **יִגְדַּל נָא כֹּחַ ה'** – If Moshe Rabbeinu's proposal to Hashem was to allow us to exist just for the sake of bringing Him more honor, and Hashem was maskim just because of that — "If that's the case," Hashem said, "if the existence of the nation will be an honor for Me, then I'll keep them alive" — it means that our existence in the world, in world history, is because of that episode that took place in our parsha. We're around today only because of this principle of kevod Shamayim, in order to increase the honor of Hashem.

Now, on its most basic level it means that when there's the Am Yisroel, it's a glory for Hashem. That's a very important point: The Jewish nation, just the fact that we're still around, our mere existence is a testament to Hashem because we are the ones who testify to the One true G-d.

Existing in the Shadows

I'll explain that a little more before we go on with the subject. You know, in Europe in the Middle Ages we lived in the shadow of the cathedral. Everywhere there was a church; wherever you walked you heard church bells.

Everywhere there were idols in the streets, and also nuns and priests, and everybody who passed them crossed themselves. Someone once described to me an old Irish woman in Ireland — he took her for a ride in a taxi — and she was crossing herself a mile a minute. For every icon, every statue, every priest, every nun they passed by, she was crossing herself. He thought she would tear up her shirt by crossing herself so much.

Imagine that a thousand times more, that's how it was in the Middle Ages. The whole European world — even the Jewish world — was in the shadow of the church.

Now, what did the church mean? The whole church was based on an idea that a god was born of a woman. He was a god and there's nothing else to talk about.

The Jew Denies

Now suddenly they see a most unwelcome figure, a form of a Jew walking through a side street. You know what that means? The existence of that Jew means that everything you say is a lie, that your god had a father.

I once saw a little tract issued by a fundamentalist Christian group and the author was fulminating against the modern Christian "imposters" who are willing to say that he wasn't born of god, that he had a human father. And it said there, "If you're going to say that he wasn't the son of god, then you're saying that he was a B" — I won't say the rest of the word.

So the fact of a Jew walking through a medieval city, it was like he was wearing a big placard, "Your god is a B." Because otherwise, why didn't the Jew hurry to accept Christianity? Such a glorious thing, a god who was born of a woman! And here's a stubborn devil, a wicked fellow who refuses to admit that.

Jews Still Exist?

And so the mere existence of the Jew was a witness to the lies of Christianity and therefore his mere presence sent a coldness through them, a weakness. Their backbones turned into water. They felt that it's all a lie. They felt it! The Jew was supposed to have disappeared long ago because the Jewish religion was taken over by him and he gave it over to all the gentiles. "We're the real Jews now," the gentiles are thinking, "so what are you doing around here? You're a fossil! You don't belong around anymore."

But the Jews had the audacity to get together in the ghetto and build a synagogue. In the synagogue, they carried on the same old ceremonies that even the Christians' god kept. Before he became deified by being put to death, their god put on tefillin and said the same prayers, and here the Jew is carrying on as if nothing happened, as if the whole thing was a lie. And therefore, the presence of the Jew was most obnoxious to them.

The Angry False Prophet

The same was on the other side of the world. Mohammed, he just couldn't stand it. He came along and offered the Jews a deal. "Jews, you're the people of the book. You're a great people. And now I come to you with a great promise. Your G-O-D came to me and I was sent to you to tell you that from now on, there is a new law. Every word in the Koran was given to me from Heaven, Divinely inspired, and this is your great chance now for fulfillment of your great mission in the world."

You know how the Jew reacted to that? He laughed. "Uh, what was happening when this took place? Were you standing at Mount Sinai? And how many millions of people were standing and watching when Allah was talking to you?"

Now Mohammed didn't have an answer. All he could say was, "You infidels. You dogs." And he waved his sword and threatened them with death. But the Jew persisted in his faith and persisted to exist.

And so the Jew in the Muslim lands, they were also placard wearers: "Your prophet is a false prophet, a fraud. We have our One Hashem and we'll never abandon Him."

The Testifying Jew

It means that the existence of the Jews is a standing testimony to Hashem; just the fact that we walk the face of the earth as loyal Jews, we get up in the morning as loyal Jews and go to sleep at night as loyal Jews, that's the biggest kevod Shamayim there is. Because

just by means of our existence we are testifying, "Hashem Echad u'Shemo Echad."

That's what it says in the book of Yeshaya in the name of Hakadosh Baruch Hu: **אַתֶּם עֵדַי נְאֻם ה׳** – "You are My witnesses," said Hashem (43:10). If you'll open the siddur, it states, **שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה׳ אֱלֹקינוּ ה׳ אֶחָד**. The ayin of the Shema is a big ayin and the daled of the Echad is a big daled. Ayin and daled means eid, witness.

What do we testify? We testify that Hashem Elokei Yisroel created the world. We say it every morning and evening, but that's just to remind us that we're eidim all day long too. A Jew, just by existing, is announcing to the world, "Hashem Echad!"

They don't want to hear it! Some of them want to talk about their three-in-one concoction, others about their prophet and his puppet god. Others — the materialists — they want to live brutishly, to throw themselves into the pursuit of pleasure and power and immoralities. They try to cover their ears. But we're still going strong, announcing to the world, "Hashem Echad," which means everything they say is all wrong, all mixed up. And therefore, the presence of the Jew is not appreciated.

The Witness Protection Program

You understand now why all these efforts have been made, on a grand scale, to wipe out the Jewish people. Mankind has a seething desire inside which usually is concealed, a desire to get rid of the witnesses.

Did you ever hear of that statement, "Get rid of the witnesses"? Suppose the government finally has some witnesses against big mafia bosses, so the mafia have one interest in mind — to get rid of the witnesses, to give them cement shoes. That's why people are afraid to be witnesses because the powerful criminals will not stop at anything. So if the government really means business, it puts up a very strong guard to protect the lives of the witnesses.

Which means the fact that the Am Yisroel continues to exist is an honor for Hashem. There are so many reasons why we shouldn't exist. The hostility of all the nations who were always against us from the earliest times. The old Greeks were very much opposed to us. Every nation tried to destroy us. And the fact that we persist to this day, that's kevod Shamayim, that's a glory for Hashem!



שְׁאַל אָבִיךָ וְיַגֶּדְךָ זְקֵנֶיךָ וְיֹאמְרוּ לָךְ

Q ***If a Jew is verbally abused by a non-Jew, what's the best thing to do?***

A If a gentile insults a Jew, so the best thing to do is to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for the great kavod. It's a reminder, that's all. You're being reminded that you're the best, you're the aristocrat of humanity.

And so if the goy on the street calls you a name — "Dirty Jew," he says — you should feel very happy. Very happy! It's a good sign! Hakadosh Baruch Hu is saying, "I've chosen you."

And therefore, **אַל יִפֹּל לֵב אָדָם בְּקִרְבּוֹ**. Never feel sad if you're being insulted. On the contrary, you should say, **בָּרוּךְ אֱלֹקֵינוּ שֶׁבְּרָאָנוּ לִכְבוֹדוֹ וְהִבְדִּילָנוּ מִן הַתּוֹעִים** — "I'm so grateful that He separated us from all those who are wandering after falsehood."

Now, you're not mechuyav to bless him in your heart — as far as you're concerned, let him drop dead. But that's not the big achievement. The achievement is to ignore the insult and be reminded who you are and to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu that He chose you: **אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל עַם וְרוֹמְמָנוּ מִכָּל לָשׁוֹן** — He elevated us, from all the other nations. And the more they insult you, the more it's a sign of the greatness of the Am Yisroel.

Counterfeit Money! Rav **Simcha Zissel Ziv zt"l, the Alter of Kelm**, has a beautiful parable.

A Jew was taking a walk one Shabbos afternoon and noticed a thick wad of 100-ruble notes lying in the grass. His initial reaction was that it was Shabbos and it was forbidden to touch the money. His second reaction was to start rationalizing. After all, he was poor and could really benefit from this money. He owed money to the grocer and the butcher and to his childrens' teachers. Then he started rationalizing even more. It would even be a mitzvah to pick up the money!



His thought process went from one extreme to the other. First, he felt that it was forbidden to pick up the money. He eventually felt that it was even meritorious to pick up the money.

He was about to pick up the money when another Jew passed by and bent down to look at the money. He turned to the first Jew and exclaimed, "What are you looking at? Don't you realize that the money is counterfeit?"

Had the first Jew picked up the money and then found out that it was counterfeit, he would have felt terrible. Once the temptation was no longer real, he would have realized that it would have been wrong to pick it up. He would have understood that he was blinded by the desire for money and that he was just trying to rationalize a misdeed.

This is how the Yetzer Hara, the evil inclination, works. He tempts us to sin, making us feel that we will benefit and feel pleasure from the action. The reality is that it is an illusion, like the counterfeit money in the story.

Sinning will not bring the promised feelings of true and lasting pleasure and fulfillment. Not only that, but it will also cause misery and misfortune. That would be in addition to the punishment that the sinner will receive.

Our challenge in life, says the Alter of Kelm, is to pass the tests that the Yetzer Hara constantly gives us. We must see through the false pleasures that the yetzer Hara tempts us with.

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l gives examples of challenges to avoid. He advises avoiding joining groups of people that we know will speak loshon hara, slanderous speech. We should not rationalize joining such a group, saying that we will be careful not to listen to loshon hara or speak it.

Similarly, we should not go where we will be exposed to improper conduct of any kind, thinking that we will be strong enough to withstand temptations.

In this week's Parsha, the Jewish People were days away from entering the Land of Israel. Hashem had promised that the land would be good. Yet the Jewish People told Moshe that they wanted to first check the land for themselves. They showed a lack of trust in Hashem and in His promise. That opened them to the test of the Yetzer Hara. Now they could be tested to see if they would concur with Hashem or dispute Hashem (Rashi). Unfortunately, they failed their test. That failure changed the course of Jewish history.

The Yetzer Hara continuously tries to cause us to sin. Obviously, we do not ask for such challenges. When they do come, we should try to minimize the challenges in our eyes to help us pass them. The temptations that the Yetzer Hara presents are "fool's gold" and a

form of fake happiness. Any pleasure we may derive from them will be fleeting and will not give us long-lasting happiness. Instead it will leave us with more of an empty feeling than before.

Understanding that, will help us to overcome the challenges we face on daily basis. It will elevate us to a higher level of closeness to Hashem.



Under the Radar

There is a perplexing statement made in the middle of this week's Haftorah: **וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה אֶת־שְׁנֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים וַתִּצְפְּנוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר כֵּן בָּאוּ אֵלַי הָאֲנָשִׁים וְלֹא יָדַעְתִּי מֵאַיִן הֵמָּה]** – The woman took the two men and hid him. She said, 'It is true, the men did come to me, but I didn't know where they were from.'" (Yehoshua 2:4)

What happened to the second Jewish scout that Rachav reportedly only hid one of them?

In order to fully appreciate the answer, we must first hear an incredible story shared in Rav Nachman Seltzer's Child of War:

My grandfather's name was Elimelech Dovid. He was a very Chassidishe Yid, a tall man who had the most majestic flowing white beard that created a very impressive figure. He was well-liked in the community, but his life wasn't always smooth. Many years earlier, he was a young yeshivah student when he was drafted into the Hungarian army – a terrible experience for a sheltered Chassidishe young man surrounded by vulgar "comrades" who made his life miserable. From time to time, his platoon would be stationed near a village that contained some Jewish life. Then he would be able to partake of a Shabbos meal, obtain some kosher food, and enjoy a little Jewish company.

One weekend, Zeide's division ended up near a nice-sized Jewish community, so his commanding officer granted permission to daven in town. Filled with excitement, he dressed up in his finest uniform and went to shul, where he

joyfully welcomed the Shabbos along with the rest of the congregation who fought over the privilege of hosting this soldier radiant with joy just to spend Shabbos with other Jews.

The Greenfield family won and fell in love with my zeide's sense of humor, pearls of Torah, and beautiful zemiros. They were amazed at how he could remain such a fine yeshivah boy in such a corrupt environment.

By the end of that Shabbos, the Greenfield family was convinced that my zeide was the perfect match for one of their daughters. My zeide was very honored that such a warm family wanted him for their son-in-law, but he still had a year to go in the army. They discussed it more and decided he was too special to pass up. My zeide finished his service and returned to begin a beautiful new family – at least for a little until World War I exploded as millions of soldiers killed each other over a few miles of no-man's land.

My zeide was devastated when, after served his time, received another letter from the Hungarian Army telling him to report to a certain place, on a certain day, for his medical examination and uniform. The army was a terrible, dehumanizing experience.

He went straight to the Kalischitzer Rebbe for guidance. The Rebbe pondered the situation then said, "Reb Elimelech, listen to me. I have something that will take care of you and protect you from the army. I want you to wear this bekishe (frock) when you go to the induction center. With G-d's help, everything will be okay."

He felt renewed hope with the Rebbe's promise and traveled to the induction center together with many other men, all waiting their turns to be examined by the doctors and issued their uniforms and papers. He took a seat in the cavernous room alongside some of the other Jewish men. The Rebbe's bekishe sent warmth and confidence coursing through his body. Army officers walked around, glaring at the recruits and showing them how they could expect to be treated just as soon as they were officially soldiers. From time to time, an officer would call out another name, and that person would enter the doctor's office for his examination.

Eventually, the room was almost empty with no way to avoid being seen, yet my zeide's name had still not been called... Everyone had been examined and the gigantic room was entirely emptied out. Now they were cleaning up and the officers were talking among themselves. They were starting to turn off the lights. Zeide finally realized that it was true. There was a separation

standing between him and them that didn't allow the officers to see what they were not supposed to see. Not once had anyone uttered a single word to him. He strolled casually out of the building, still clad in the Rebbe's bekishe that made him invisible, and returned home to raise our family, never to be drafted for the war.

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The Midrash (Tanchuma Shelach 1) beautifully explains that Pinchas miraculously became invisible as he was like an angel hiding in plain sight. Although it may be difficult, we cannot underestimate the profound power of devotedly following the Almighty and His lofty leaders. You may even become angelic too – just like Zeide.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

"A horse has no spiritual struggles, and a table has no distractions. The greatness of a human being is not that he has no challenges, but that he rises above them."

A prominent דיין (rabbinical judge) who later became a leading figure in the Chofetz Chaim community once related an incident from his youth.

As a young bochur, he arrived at a large Lithuanian yeshivah. Many of the students there were older than he was and had a different, more advanced style of learning. Feeling uncertain about how he would succeed, he and his father traveled for Shabbos to seek the guidance and blessing of **Rabbi Yaakov Leizerovich of Peshwarsk**.

His father asked what could help his son succeed and hoped that the Rebbe would give him a special blessing.

The young man spent Shabbos there, and on Motzaei Shabbos he entered with a kvittel (written request). In it he wrote that he was asking for a blessing that he should be able to learn Torah and daven without any obstacles whatsoever.

R' Yankele read the note and repeated aloud: **בלי שום מניעות ?**

"To learn and daven without any obstacles? Without any obstacles?"

Then he pointed to a bench and a table and said: "That bench and table have no obstacles. A horse also has no such struggles. But do human beings live without obstacles?"

He then explained using the verse from that week's parashah:

"**וְלֹא תָתוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם זֹנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם**" - 'Do not follow after your hearts and after your eyes, after which you stray.'"

He said: "The Torah could have written, 'if you stray' (im atem zonim). Why does it say 'asher atem zonim' — 'that you stray'?

Because the Torah is teaching that struggles and temptations are part of life. There is no such thing as serving Hashem without challenges. The obligation is '**ולא תתורו**' — not to follow them."

Then he concluded:

"I cannot bless you that you should have no obstacles at all. What I can bless you with is 98% success and 2% obstacles."

"May Hashem grant us complete pleasantness and success. But when challenges do arise, we should understand what they are. Sometimes they are a wake-up call, a gentle nudge, a small shake to awaken us and help us grow."

While R' Yankele's point was that challenges are not an exception to avodas Hashem; they are part of it. The blessing is not the absence of struggle, but the ability to succeed despite it.

'The meraglim spoke about stones and cities, yet their words destroyed a generation. - A person's speech can build worlds or bring them down.' ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

Parsha Burst – Rabbi Jeremy Golker

Parallel Bookends: Meraglim and Tzitzis



There are striking parallels in **פרשת שלח לך** between the beginning of the **פרשה** and the end of the **פרשה**. The beginning of the **פרשה** which deals with the **מרגלים**, the fateful episode of the spies, and the end of the **פרשה**, the **פרשה** of **ציצית**.

How so? Well, one parallel is that in the **מרגלים** it says **וראיתם את הארץ מה היא**, you will see the land, see the nature of the land. And at the end of the **פרשה** it says **והיה לכם לציצית וראיתם אותו**, the same word **וראיתם**.

Another parallel, in the **מרגלים** it says **ויעלו ויתורו את הארץ**, they will tour, they will explore the land. And at the end of the **פרשה** in **ציצית** it says **ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם אשר אתם זונים אחריהם**, the same word **תתורו**.

What is the nature of this parallel? They're striking.

One of the quirks of **ציצית** is that it's actually an optional **מצוה**. It's a **מצות קיומית**. What does that mean?

In contrast to most **מצוות** which are **מצוות חיוביות**, which they're obligations. I have to put on **תפילין**, I have to shake **לולב**, there's no questions asked, there's no two ways about it. But **ציצית** is only a **מצוה** if I have a four-cornered garment. I'm not obligated to go out and buy a four-cornered garment. If I have a four-cornered garment, then I need to put on **ציצית**. So ultimately, I don't have to

wear a four-cornered garment, and therefore **ציצית** is optional. Of course, I'd be crazy not to, but ultimately, it is an optional **מצוה**.

Why? Why did **הקדוש ברוך הוא** give us this precious **מצוה** in a discretionary fashion?

Says Rabbi **פרנד** in the name of Rabbi **נחום לנצקי** a fabulous answer. The **פסוק** says **שלח לך אנשים**. Says **רש״י, שלח לך לדעתך**, it's up to you.

אני איני מצוה לך, I'm not commanding you to do it. **אם תרצה שלח**, if you want to, send. The sending of spies was optional, and it turned into a disaster, an unmitigated disaster.

הקדוש ברוך הוא therefore gave us a **מצוה** which is also optional, and it can atone and rectify for the grievous sin of the **מרגלים**. Of course, **מצות ציצית** is a **מצות קיומית** and we'd be crazy not to do it, but because it's become so embedded in **כלל ישראל**.

רב משה has a **תשובה** we discussed in the contemporary **הלכה שיעור** that aside from the fact that **בעידן רתחא**, the time of danger, **הקדוש ברוך הוא** punishes a person for not doing a **מצות קיומית**. And aside from the fact that the **וילנא גאון** cried on his deathbed and he said for a few kopecks I can buy eternity by wearing **ציצית** and in a few moments' time I'll take leave of this world, I'll lose that opportunity forever.

But aside from that, says **רב משה**, it's become the **מנהג** and the **מסורה** of **כלל ישראל** to wear it. But ultimately it is an optional **מצוה** and it was given to us specifically in this way to rectify for the sending of spies, which was optional and turned into a disaster, so **הקדוש ברוך הוא** gave us a **מצוה** which was also optional that we can atone and rectify for the sin of the **מרגלים**.



"Emunah does not remove obstacles; it changes the way we look at them." ~ Rav Yerucham Levovitz.



Parsha Pearls

No Pardon for the Sin of the Spies

לָמָּה זֶּה אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־פִּי ה' וְהִוא לֹא תִצְלָח - *"Why do you transgress the word of Hashem, and it will not succeed"* (14:41).

Why is it, asks **R. Bunim from P'shischa**, that Hashem pardoned Yisrael for the sin of the Golden Calf, but not for that of the Spies?

The main ingredient of Teshuvah, he explains, is that the knowledge that one has sinned and that there is no remedy for his sin, causes the sinner profound grief.

As long as the sinner believes that he can rectify what he did wrong, and that he has nothing to worry about, his Teshuvah is incomplete.

When Yisrael sinned by the Golden Calf, they were not aware that Teshuvah helps, and were therefore broken-hearted. Hence their Teshuvah was readily accepted; whereas when they sinned by the Spies, they already knew that Teshuvah helps and were therefore complacent about their sin, as their current actions demonstrate. That is why Hashem declined to accept their Teshuvah.

I would suggest that another difference lies in the fact that whereas in the case of the Golden Calf, Yisrael were ashamed of their sin (as the Torah testifies when it records that they removed the crowns that they had only recently received, when they proclaimed ***'Na'aseh ve'Nishma'***), here they felt no shame at the terrible thing that they had done. And where there is no shame, there can be no genuine Teshuvah.

"Imagine you could open your eyes to see only the good in every person, the positive in every circumstance, and the opportunity in every challenge." ~ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

משל למה הדבר דומה

וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִת וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת ה׳

Reb Mendel Futerfas *z"l*, a renowned *Lubavitcher Chasid* who spent many harrowing years in the Siberian gulags, used to tell a fascinating story.



A fellow prisoner had been a world-class tightrope walker. Reb Mendel asked him, "What is the secret? How do you walk on a thin wire so high in the air without falling?"

The man replied, "It's all in the eyes. Before I step onto the rope, I pick a point at the far end, and I never take my eyes off it. If I look down at my feet, I lose my balance. If I look at the crowd, I can fall. My eyes are fixed on the destination."

"I asked him," said Reb Mendel, "what is the hardest part?"

The man replied: "The turn! When you reach the end, you have to turn around to go back. For a split second, you lose sight of the first point, and the new point isn't yet in focus. That moment of transition is the only time I am in real danger."

Reb Mendel learned from this that we must stay focused on our spiritual destination. The transitions in a person's life is the danger. Whether moving through ups and downs or transitioning from a place of inspiration (like *Yom Tov*) back into the mundane world, those moments of "turning" are when one must hold onto their focus with everything they have.

Parshas Shelach concludes with the commandment of *Tzitzis*. The *Torah* tells us to *"look upon it and remember all the commandments*

of Hashem," warning us not to *"wander after our hearts and our eyes."* - The *Tzitzis* act as the focal point at the end of the "rope," keeping our eyes riveted on our spiritual destination so we don't fall when navigating the dangers of the mundane world.

The Mekoshesh & Tzitzis

"And the entire congregation took him to outside the camp ... Speak to B'nei Yisrael and say to them that they shall make for themselves Tzitzis" (15:36-38).



Why does the Torah juxtapose the Parshah of Tzitzis next to that of the Mekoshesh, asks the **Da'as Zekeinim M.T.**?

When the Mekoshesh broke Shabbos, Moshe pointed out to Hashem that in the Tefilin it is written ***"in order that the Torah of Hashem shall be in your mouth"***, an indication that Tefillin serves as a reminder not to sin. But since Hashem commanded that Tefillin should not be worn on Shabbos, there was nothing to prevent the Mekoshesh from sinning.

So, Hashem replied that He would present them with another Mitzvah which, like Tefillin, stops the wearer from sinning, but which, unlike Tefillin, applies on Shabbos too - and that was the Mitzvah of Tzitzis.

"The spies looked at Eretz Yisrael through the eyes of nature. Yehoshua and Kalev looked at it through the eyes of faith." ~ Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik.





The Mission We Were Sent On -The Hidden Power we Possess

❖ A Messenger Carries The Influence of The One Who Sent Him

The Ribbono Shel Olam assigned each of us a unique mission, hand-picking us specifically for our task.

The Ohr HaChaim explains that a messenger carries the power and influence of the one who sends them. He clarifies that the Yidden who pressured Moshe to send the Meraglim had incorrect motives. Because the Meraglim acted as messengers for those with wrong intentions, that negativity influenced the messengers themselves.

❖ Our Siyata D'shmaya And The Results Of Our Mission Depends On Our Mindset

How does this apply to our daily Avodas Hashem?

The Sfas Emes throughout Parshas Shelach explores the difference between Calev and Pinchas - who succeeded as Meraglim - and the other Meraglim in the Midbar. The Midrash explains that Calev and Pinchas "**נותן נפשם בשליחותם**" – they gave their lives for their mission, meaning they wholeheartedly embraced that they were sent by the Ribbono shel Olam.

The Sfas Emes quotes his grandfather, the **Chiddushei HaRim**, explaining that the outcome of a task depends on the mindset of the person performing it. The Ohr HaChaim explained that the original Meraglim were influenced by the flawed people who initiated the

request. Conversely, Calev and Pinchas focused solely on the fact that Hashem sent them. This focus brought them their Siyata Dishmaya and their eventual success.

❖ **Hashem Sent Me On A Mission!**

The Chiddushei HaRim demonstrates that every person in this world is a direct messenger of the Ribbono Shel Olam. If you constantly focus on the reality that Hashem Himself sent you, you will experience extraordinary help from Shamyaim.

Imagine if the Rambam, the Ramak, the Baal Shem Tov, or the Vilna Gaon appeared in a dream and asked you to say brachos with kavanah, guard your eyes, avoid lashon hara, or daven with devotion. We would rush to shul the next morning to daven with unprecedented passion.

If someone asked why you were so focused, you would think, "How can you even ask? The Vilna Gaon himself asked me specifically to do this!" You would be so overwhelmed by the significance of the mission that you would simply carry on in your incredible avodah.

The Sfas Emes, quoting the Chiddushei HaRim, teaches that the Ribbono Shel Olam sent every Yiddishe child into this world with a specific mission. That mission is simply whatever we do each day. We must visualize ourselves as messengers of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When we internalize this awareness, we receive the Siyata Dishmaya to succeed in our mission.

"The meraglim were not simple people. They were leaders, princes of their tribes. Yet precisely because of their greatness, they were held accountable for viewing Eretz Yisrael through the limitations of human calculation. – A Jew must use his mind to understand the world, but he must never allow his calculations to overshadow the certainty that Hashem's promise transcends all obstacles." ~ Based on the teachings of the Chazon Ish.

Gematria Sparks

גוטֶע וָואָך = אֵלִיָהוּ הַנָבִיא[1] = 121
Have a good week (in Yiddish) **= Eliyahu HaNavi**[1]

רָצוֹן הַמֶלֶךְ = אֱמֶת = 441
Desire of the King = Truth

הַקָדוֹשׁ בָרוּךְ הוּא = קוּדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא = 655
The Holy One, blessed be He (in Hebrew) **= The Holy One, blessed be He** (in Aramaic)

Rabbi Paysach Krohn – Project Mesorah



This is your friend Rabbi Pesach Krohn speaking to you **ערב שבת פרשת שלח**. Of course in **פרשת שלח** we have the very sad story of the **מרגלים** who said bad about **ארץ ישראל** and frightened the Jews about wanting to go into **ארץ ישראל**.

And I just want to add something to this story that there's another lesson that we could learn.

רבי צדוק once said, a person has to believe in **ה׳**, he has to believe in **תורה**, and he has to believe in himself. And over here the **מרגלים** did not believe in themselves. In **פרק י״ד פסוק ל״ג** it says, when they saw the giants, **ונהי בעינינו כחגבים** - We were in their eyes like grasshoppers, and they looked at themselves so inferior, and that's why they acted in an inferior manner.

Every **ייד** must know that he is great and that he can do great things and that we are **שלוחים** of **ה׳**. And the **מרגלים** didn't look at it that way. They looked at themselves, they undermined their importance and therefore they spoke in such a way that showed their

inferiority. That they looked at themselves like grasshoppers and of course the giants then looked at them as grasshoppers.

So let's remember we're all **חשוב** and I'm going to give you a **ברכה** and you should realize that you're **חשוב**. To the men: **ישמכם אלקים כאפרים וכמנשה**. To the women: **ישמכם אלקים כשרה רבקה רחל ולאה**.

And to everyone: **יברכך ה' וישמרך יאר ה' פניו אליך ויחנך ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום**

שבת שלום, שבת המלכה, א לוסטיגע שבת.

And let's remember we are elevated people. We are **ה'ס שלוחים** in this world to spread **תורה**, to spread **יידישקייט**, to spread normality.

דער אויבערשטער should help we should all grow and fulfill our great potential. Have a great **שבת**.

The Mistake of the Meraglim

A beautiful insight from the **Sefas Emes** on the Meraglim is that their mistake was not a lack of faith in Hashem's power. They believed that Hashem could conquer the land. Their concern was that life in Eretz Yisrael would require engagement with the physical world—working the land, earning a livelihood, and dealing with worldly matters.

In the wilderness, Klal Yisrael lived on a completely spiritual plane. The manna fell from Heaven, the Well of Miriam provided water, and the Clouds of Glory surrounded them. The Meraglim preferred to remain in that environment of uninterrupted spirituality.

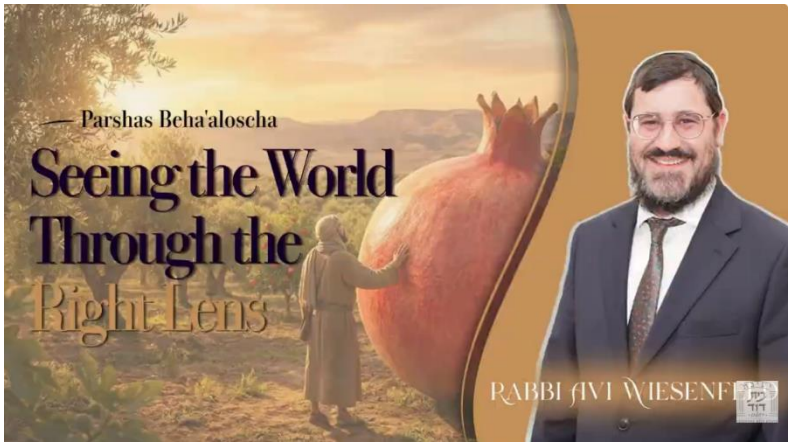
The Sefas Emes explains that they failed to understand the true purpose of creation. Hashem does not desire that holiness remain isolated from the physical world; rather, His will is that we bring kedushah into everyday life. The greatness of Eretz Yisrael is precisely that one can plow, sow, build, and engage in worldly

activities while serving Hashem. The mission was not to escape the world but to elevate it.

Thus, the sin of the Meraglim was that they viewed spirituality and physicality as opposites. Moshe Rabbeinu's vision, and Hashem's plan, was that holiness should permeate the physical world itself.

The Sefas Emes writes that every Jew faces this challenge. It is easier to feel close to Hashem in moments devoted exclusively to Torah and tefillah. The greater accomplishment is to carry that connection into one's work, home, and daily responsibilities, transforming ordinary life into a dwelling place for the Shechinah.

This was the lesson the Meraglim failed to grasp, and it remains one of the central messages of Parshas Shelach.



The Meraglim

I want to raise two fundamental questions. If the mission to spy out the land of Israel was so critical, why did Hashem command that they specifically send the leaders of the generation? And what exactly was the mistake that they made?

The Chidushei Harim, the Gerer Rebbe, explains that the very purpose of their mission required the greatest people. For over a year, they had lived surrounded by open miracles. They ate the manna from heaven, they drank water from a rock, they were protected by the clouds of glory. They lived with a constant awareness that Hashem was directing every detail of their lives.

But all of that was about to change. The purpose of creation was never for the Jewish people to remain in the desert. The goal was Eretz Yisrael. The challenge was to leave a world of revealed

miracles and enter a world that appeared to operate through nature. Their mission was to walk out of the Ananei Kavod, the clouds of glory and into nature without losing sight of Hashem.

They were meant to take everything they had learned in the wilderness and bring that perspective with them into Eretz Yisrael. They were supposed to recognize that nature is just a veil and that Hashem is no less present behind a harvest than he is behind the man.

That is why only the greatest men were chosen. But it was precisely here that they failed. They entered the land and saw giants, fortified cities, powerful armies, and instead of viewing those things through the perspective they had gained in the wilderness, they allowed themselves to see the world through the lens of nature.

"And we were like grasshoppers in our eyes." The giants hadn't changed. Hashem hadn't changed. Only their perspective had changed. The purpose of the wilderness was to teach them how to look at the world from above, to see Hashem's hand behind everything. Their mission was to bring that perspective into Eretz Yisrael. But they failed. They saw giants and forgot the creator of the giants. They saw nature and forgot the one running it.

During World War II, a Jewish mother in Europe was separated from her teenage son. As he was being taken away, she managed to whisper one sentence, "Whatever happens, don't forget that Hashem is with you."

Years passed and the boy survived camps, hunger, and loss. He never heard from his mother again and assumed that she'd been killed. After the war, he emigrated, built a family, and slowly rebuilt his life.

Decades later, after his father passed away, he was sorting through old belongings. Hidden inside a worn siddur, he found a letter. It was from his mother. The letter had never reached him. With trembling

hands, he unfolded the faded paper. He expected advice, instructions, perhaps a bracha. Instead, there was only one line.

- ***"If you're reading this, remember every breath you take is a kiss from Hashem."*** - The old man broke down crying. For 50 years, he had spent his life looking for dramatic signs from Hashem, yet his mother had understood something he was still learning. Not every message from Hashem arrives as a miracle. Sometimes the miracle is the breath itself.

The challenge of life is not seeing Hashem when bread falls from the sky. The challenge is seeing Hashem when bread grows from the ground. Not seeing Hashem when the sea splits, but seeing Hashem when the waves rise and fall every day.

The miraglim looked at Eretz Yisrael and saw giants. Yehoshua and Calev looked at the same land and saw Hashem. **The Kedushas Levi** is teaching us - ***'Remember, manna fell from the heaven once a day, breath falls from heaven every second.'!***

Good Shabbos.

"The spies described themselves as grasshoppers in their own eyes. Before they ever faced the giants of Canaan, they had already diminished themselves. The first battle in life is not against external enemies but against the inner voice that tells a person he is too small to fulfil the mission Hashem has given him." ~ Based on the teachings of Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz.

"Yehoshua and Kalev saw exactly what the spies saw. The difference was not in their eyes but in their hearts. Faith allows a person to see opportunities where others see only difficulties." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.



The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh offers profound, spiritually penetrating insights on Parshas Shelach Lecha, blending deep Kabbalistic thought with practical moral lessons.

His key teachings focus on the tragic psychology of the spies, the ultimate purpose of the Land of Israel, and the spiritual power of Tzitzit. - The key takeaways from the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh center on the profound spiritual psychology behind the sin of the spies and the true meaning of the land of Israel.

The Sin of the Spies (Meraglim)

Rejection of the Physical: The Ohr HaChaim notes that the spies were incredibly righteous leaders (Tzaddikim) and great men but fell victim to a spiritual error. Their tragic mistake was that they preferred the highly elevated, miraculous existence of the desert (eating Mann and studying Torah directly from Moshe) over engaging with the physical, agricultural realities of Eretz Yisrael.

They feared that entering the physical, agrarian land of Israel would separate them from their high, pristine level of spiritual existence in the desert (where they ate heavenly Mann). They wanted to remain in a state of uninterrupted Torah study, failing to grasp the mission of elevating the physical world. By rejecting the physical labor of the Land of Israel, they implicitly rejected the Divine mandate to elevate the physical world and reveal the hidden spiritual sparks (Nitzotzot) embedded within creation.

He explains that their fatal mistake was prioritizing their own preferred spiritual path over Hashem's will. By maligning the land,

they rejected the ultimate purpose of creation—bringing Divine holiness into the everyday, physical world.

Lack of Bitachon: The fatal flaw of the generation was choosing to rely on their own human logic rather than trusting implicitly in Hashem's promise and His ability to protect them in the battlefield.

The Sanctity and Exclusivity of the Land: The Ohr HaChaim heavily emphasizes that Eretz Yisrael is Hashem's most beloved and personal possession. It is not a standard, run-of-the-mill country, but a place uniquely sensitive to spiritual purity. The spies failure to respect and cherish the Land above all other places was seen as an offense against Hashem's direct inheritance.

The Ohr HaChaim contrasts the spies ingratitude with the love of Yehoshua and Kalev, who recognized that the land was a supreme gift from Hashem and "exceedingly good". He highlights that harboring a deep, internal love and appreciation for the land is a core spiritual trait that every Yid must cultivate.

The Purpose of Tzitzit - A Remedy for the Sin: The Parshah concludes with the mitzvah of Tzitzit. The Ohr HaChaim explains this commandment was meant as a spiritual "antidote" to the sin of the spies. While the Meraglim failed by looking at the physical world with a negative, fearful, and faithless lens, wearing Tzitzit provides a daily visual anchor. It elevates ordinary clothing into a holy mitzvah, ensuring that wherever a Jew goes, they are reminded of Hashem's commandments rather than being distracted by the temptations of the physical world.

"The sin of the spies teaches that facts alone do not guarantee truth. A person can observe accurately and still arrive at the wrong conclusion if his observations are not guided by emunah." ~ Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner.

Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz zt"l, 26 Sivan (1916-2011)

Some **תלמידים** of Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz would sometimes stay up late at night working on the **סוגיא**. They asked their rebbi what they should do if they come to a difficult question in the **סוגיא** in the middle of the night. He simply answered, "Come and knock on my door!"

One night, at 2 a.m., they hit a brick wall and went over to Rav Michel Yehuda's house and knocked lightly on the door. Rav Michel Yehuda greeted them with a warm smile, explained to them the entire **סוגיא** until it was crystal clear to them.

This was the life of Rav Michel Yehuda, a life filled with **אהבת תורה**, a love for his **תלמידים**, and a deep care for every single Jew.

Born in 1916 in Volozhin, Rav Michel Yehuda learnt **תורה** from giants of the time, Rav Sholom Heiman, Rav Leib Chasman, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer and later on from the **חזון איש**.

His **התמדה** was extraordinary. The rebbetzin would tell her grandchildren how in the early years, he would learn by the light of a kerosene lamp until dawn, then take a slight nap until he davened **ותיקין** and then after that, he would begin his regular day of learning.

For over seventy years, he taught thousands of **תלמידים**. First at **ישיבת תפארת ציון** and later as **מגיד שיעור** and **ראש ישיבה** at **פונוביז' לצעירים** .

In his later years, Rav Michel Yehuda suffered from insomnia, but he would remain in bed with his eyes closed in a relaxed state as long as possible. One of his grandchildren asked him, why don't you just get up and learn **תורה** during that time, he answered, "I must be as rested as possible for my **תלמידים**."

He didn't just teach **תורה**, he watched and cared for the wellbeing of each and every **תלמיד**.

One time, a **תלמיד** was having a strained relationship with his parents, they were not seeing eye to eye on many issues. The **ראש ישיבה** listened to him and reassured him that everything would be OK.

Little did this **תלמיד** realize what would happen next. When he came home later that day, his parents told him, "You will not believe who came to the house earlier today! Your rebbi, Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz was here, he was telling us how impressed he is with you." - Needless to say, the relationship was no longer strained.

In the 1970s, the **ראש ישיבה** suffered from cataracts which greatly impaired his vision. He told his **תלמידים** that despite his condition, he could do what he needed to. "But what really bothers me," he said, "is that someone may say hello to me and I may not notice and reply to his gesture and that person may feel bad. That really disturbs me."

Many of the greatest names of the **תורה** world in **ארץ ישראל** were **תלמידים** of Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz, including Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Rav Nissim Karelitz, Rav Meir Zvi Bergman and Rav Osher Arielli, just to name a few. He guided **כלל ישראל** through so many organizations - **לב לאחים, עזר מציון, קופת העיר, אחינו, דרשו, חינוך עצמאי** and so many more. He was the address for so many **חינוך** related issues. He guided principals and rebbei'im about acceptance policies, providing curriculum for so many. No matter what, his focus was on the care for each and every **תלמיד**.

A principal and a rebbi once came to Rav Michel Yehuda when he was already in his eighties to discuss a young teenager who was in a very difficult home situation. They asked if he should stay at home or move somewhere else.

After analyzing the details, the **ראש ישיבה** said that he should move somewhere else. They told him that people are hesitant to bring him into their home, because he has become rebellious due to the

strained situation. Then and there, Rav Michel Yehuda announced, "He will stay in my home."

Under the **ישיבה ראש**'s care, the boy thrived.

The **ראש ישיבה** 's greatness did not begin at the top of the mountain, he climbed step by step until he reached the top. His family found a list of **קבלות** that he had made over the years, simple normal steps that were the foundation for his ultimate greatness. Some of them were as follows:

To concentrate on each and every word of the **ברכות** that he would recite, to have proper **כוונה** during the first two **פסוקים** of **שמע**. He accepted upon himself to try his utmost not to discuss other people because that often leads to **לשון הרע**, to sincerely help the burden of another person and to daven for him at least once a week.

These were the steady intentional steps that led Rav Michel Yehuda to greatness.

With such **גדלות** in **תורה** and love for others, it is no surprise that the **ברכות** Rav Michel Yehuda gave others were so powerful.

Sadly, on 26th 5771 **סיון**, Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz was **נפטר**. Tens of thousands of people filled the streets of **בני ברק** to honor this giant of **תורה** and care for every Jew. He taught us that true greatness is built one step at a time.

Let us bring that same warmth and love into our own lives and extend it to every Yid as well.

We just got so inspired by Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz's love for every single Yid. The question is: What are we going to do with that inspiration? Education and inspiration are one thing but transformation is another. **(By Rav Yaakov Moskowitz)**

The Purpose of the "Second" Hole

וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִת וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ - *"It shall constitute tzitzis for you, that you may see it" (15:39)*



The holy tzaddik, **Reb Mordechai of Neshchiz zt"l**, wished to obtain a woolen tallis katan made from wool originating in Eretz Yisroel. In those days, such wool was extremely difficult to acquire. After much effort and expense, he finally succeeded in obtaining a piece of wool from Eretz Yisroel.

The tzaddik entrusted the task of making the tallis katan to one of his chassidim, a true yerei Shamayim. Approaching the task with awe and holiness, the chassid first immersed himself in the mikveh and davened to Hashem for success before beginning his work.

After carefully preparing the garment, only one step remained: cutting the opening through which the head would pass. To create the opening properly, the fabric should be folded once and cut along the fold so that, when opened, the hole appears in the center. However, the chassid mistakenly folded the fabric incorrectly and cut the opening near the side. When he unfolded the garment, he was horrified to discover that he had created two openings instead of one.

The chassid was devastated. He knew how much effort and money his Rebbe had invested in obtaining this precious wool, and now, through his mistake, the garment seemed ruined. Embarrassed and afraid, he could not bring himself to face his Rebbe.

When Reb Mordechai noticed that the chassid had not come to deliver the tallis katan, he summoned him and asked, "Where is the garment?"

The chassid burst into tears and could barely speak. The Rebbe gently calmed him and asked, "What happened?"

The chassid explained how he had accidentally cut two openings in the tallis katan.

To his surprise, the tzaddik replied, "What is the problem? A tallis katan needs two openings!"

The chassid stared at his Rebbe in disbelief, unable to understand what he meant.

The Rebbe smiled and explained, "One opening is for the head, as every tallis katan requires. The second opening is there to ensure that Reb Mordechai does not become angry."

Years later, the tzaddik would point to that very tallis katan, which he had preserved, and say that he kept it as a constant reminder that one must never embarrass or shame another Yid.

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

Brothers and Arms

Welcome back to **מדרש ומעשה**, sharing a story for this week's **פרשה, פרשת שלח**.

רב בן ציון אבא שאול זצ״ל, the great **ראש ישיבה** of **פורת יוסף** in **ירושלים**, was known for his great **אהבת ישראל**. Toward the end of his life, he'd suffered a stroke and he was partially paralyzed.

One of the **רבנים** in our neighborhood, **רב חגי מזוז שליט״א**, was a **תלמיד** of his, and he said that in one **שיעור**, somebody asked him, they said, "Should we devote time to learning the **ספר חפץ חיים**?" which goes in great detail about the laws of **שמירת הלשון**, of not saying things which are negative and forbidden about other people.

So **רב בן ציון** said, "Of course a person should devote time to learning the **ספר**, but," he says, "I will give you a key to all the observance, to

everything that you need to observe the laws of **לשון הרע** properly." He said, "You need to love people. A person doesn't say **לשון הרע** about someone whom they love."

Someone in the crowd then asked him, he says, "**רב**, is it allowed to speak **לשון הרע** about **אחינו הטועים**, our erring brothers, meaning Jews who don't keep **תורה** and **מצוות**?"

So **רב בן ציון** had one arm which was paralyzed and the other arm which was functional. The paralyzed arm used to kind of rest on the arm of his wheelchair at a right angle. So he pointed with the arm he was able to utilize to that paralyzed arm. He said, "Can this arm hate that arm?"

Now, he wasn't simply giving the common **משל** of we're all part of one body, but even more than that: the paralyzed arm was limiting the functionality of his entire being. The arm which could function was also limited because one arm, so to speak, wasn't behaving, wasn't doing what he may have wanted it to be able to do, wasn't pitching in with the rest of the body. He said, nonetheless, the love is there if a person truly understands that we're all one.

רש״י in the beginning of the **פרשה** points out that underlying the mistake of the **מרגלים** was the concept of **לשון הרע**, right, whether **לשון הרע** about **ארץ ישראל** or even, as he points out later, against **הקדוש ברוך הוא, חס ושלום**. So he gives us this one understanding that we need in order to succeed in that world of **שמירת הלשון**: ***love and oneness, love and unity.***

This lesson is one that he embodied, and that we certainly need to take upon ourselves as we try to repair the damage that was done by the **מרגלים**, which led to the **תשעה באב** that we've unfortunately had to keep for so many years. And hopefully, with that **תיקון**, will lead into the **גאולה שלימה** and the **יום טוב** of **תשעה באב**, which will come this year **במהרה בימינו**. Have a very good **שבת**.



Torah Gems

ויהושע בן נון וכלב בן יפנה מן התרים את הארץ קרעו בגדיהם וכו' (יד-ו)

The question is raised: Why did Yehoshua and Calev tear their clothing at this juncture - an act that symbolizes desperation and hopelessness - and not courage and fearlessness, that was necessary to stem the tide of rebellion and assuage the fears of an angry people?

The great Rebbe, **R' Menachem Mendel ZT"L of Kotzk**, interprets this as follows: When the Torah writes "**קרעו בגדיהם**" - They rent their garments, it does not mean Yehoshua and Calev's clothing, rather the garments of the disloyal spies!

As we know, the **מרגלים** were of the distinguished members of the nation. Surely these **נשיאים** were dressed in respectable and appropriate attire suitable for their lofty rank. However, when they descended to the lowest **מדרגה** by speaking **לשון הרע** on the land, Yehoshua and Calev rushed to tear their clothing to testify before the people that these are no longer leaders and guides who are worthy to follow.

Through this act of noble bravery, they tried to stop the rebellion.