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Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> Thu, Jun 15, 5:01 PM (7 hours ago)

Parshas Shlach Moshe Was Confident that Calev's Wife Would Set Him Straight print

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly portion: #1253 – Carrying Nitroglycerin on Shabbos for Heart Patient / Candy for Diabetic? Mutar or Asur Good Shabbos!

There is a famous question asked in this parsha. We suggested numerous answers over the years. This year, we will present two new approaches suggested by Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky in his sefer.

The pasuk says that Moshe changed the name of Hoshea bin Nun to Yehoshua (Bamidbar 13:16), invoking (according to Rashi) a prayer by Moshe on Yehoshua's behalf that Hashem should save him from the scheme of the Meraglim (Spies). All the meforshim ask why Moshe was more concerned about Yehoshua than he was about Calev.

Earlier in the same perek (Bamidbar 13:4-15), when the Torah lists the various Meraglim by tribal affiliation, the Ramban and other meforshim are troubled at the sequence with which these individuals are listed. Their names don't appear to be listed in any particular order.

The Ramban notes that the names are not enumerated by flag configuration, nor by size, nor by birth order. The Ramban suggests that perhaps they are ordered by the prestige of each individual, rather than his shevet (tribe). In other words, maybe they are listed in order of their personal importance, rather than by the significance of the shevet they represented. According to the Ramban's theory, Rav Yaakov points out that Shamua ben Zachur and Shafat ben Chori would have been greater in prestige than Calev ben Yefuneh and Yehoshua bin Nun. This is difficult to accept because we never hear from Shamua ben Zachur or Shafat ben Chori again.

Rav Yaakov himself explains the order of the listing of the Meraglim in a different fashion: The first two Meraglim listed represented respectively Reuven and Shimon. That makes perfect sense. Levi is not mentioned because Shevet Levi (the Tribe of Levi) did not send a representative. That we understand as well. Next, we would expect Shevet Yehudah to be listed and indeed that is the case: Calev ben Yefuneh, the third spy listed, is from Shevet Yehudah. So far, so good. Then, however, the next pasuk lists

Hoshea bin Nun, who was from Shevet Ephraim, one of the youngest shevatim. Why?

Rashi comments (Devarim 1:22) that they approached Moshe Rabbeinu b'iruvuya (in a tumult). He saw the youngsters pushing away the elders. He saw the pushing and shoving and lack of any appropriate order. Moshe Rabbeinu invoked something here that I am sure everyone who has ever been a parent has said sometime in his life when confronted by such situations: "This is not going to end well!" In other words, when Moshe saw this iruvuya of the youngsters pushing away their elders, he said "Uh-oh. This is not being done the way Jews should behave and the way Jews should act." Therefore, at this point in time, Moshe Rabbeinu was inspired to say to his disciple: "May Hashem save you from the scheme of the Spies."

Up until this point, things were going according to the proper sequence: Reuven, Shimon, Yehudah. All was fine. But when Moshe saw this situation, where the "ne'arim" (youth) were pushing aside the "zekainim" (elders), he saw that this mission was not being undertaken for the sake of Heaven. This is not the way things are supposed to be done. Earlier in the narration, when Calev was mentioned, there was not yet a need to invoke the prayer "May Hashem save you from the scheme of the Spies" because at that point, everything was still going properly.

Rav Yaakov gives a second answer to his question of why Moshe gave Yehoshua a bracha, and not Calev. This answer contains a tremendous truth within it. He says the reason Moshe felt compelled to give Yehoshua a bracha and not Calev is that Calev was married to a righteous woman (Miriam haNeviah). Certainly, Calev would therefore not fall prey to the evil schemes of the Meraglim, and so Calev was not in need of a blessing. At the time, Yehoshua was still single. Calev, who was married to a tzadekes, had a spiritual anchor. Therefore, Moshe could be confident that Calev would not "get caught up" in the plan of the Meraglim.

Rav Weinberg used to advise unmarried young men who were contemplating going to graduate school (whether it be law school, medical school, dental school, or whatever) that they should not start graduate school until they were married. "Yes, you can go to graduate school, but you should be married first." When someone is in Yeshiva, even if he is going to college on the side, the Yeshiva is his anchor. But when someone goes to graduate school and is in school full-time, all day, he is in a world which presents its own set of nisyonos (spiritual tests). A person needs an anchor. He needs the anchor of a home and the anchor of a wife.

That is why, Rav Yaakov explains, Calev did not need Moshe's bracha. It was because he was married to Miriam. When someone is married to a woman like Miriam, he has a solid anchor. Yehoshua was not married at this time, and therefore Moshe had to pray for him: "May Hashem save you from the scheme of the Spies."

A Person Hears What He Wants To Hear

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky's other observation is on the pasuk, "In this wilderness shall your carcasses drop; all your counted ones in any of your numberings, from twenty years of age and above, whom you provoked against Me." (Bamidbar 14:29) The only ones who died in the midbar were people who were between twenty and sixty years old. People who were either younger than twenty or past the age of sixty at the time of the census did not die as part of the collective punishment for the aveira (sin) of the Meraglim.

Rav Yaakov asks a very practical question: Does this imply that no one over sixty, without exception, went along with the Meraglim and believed their negative report? How can the Torah make such a statement?

Rav Yaakov shares a very interesting idea, which teaches us an important lesson. He says the people who were over sixty did not believe the Meraglim. The reason they didn't believe them is that the people over sixty were past the draft age. They knew that they were not going to need to fight. The Meraglim's pessimistic report centered around the fact that the Canaanim (Canaanites) were stronger than the Jews. "We are not going to be able to fight them; we are not going to be able to defeat them. They are too strong for us, therefore let us not go into Eretz Yisrael."

For people who were of draft age and who were destined to need to take part in such a war, this was a message that resonated with them. "I don't want to fight. I don't want to be drafted. I don't want to take part in such a war." Such a person was ready to listen to the message of the Meraglim. But a person over sixty, who was not going to go into the army anyway, was able to look at what the Meraglim were saying objectively: "On the one hand, the Ribono shel Olam is saying 'We can go in and win'; on the other hand, the Meraglim are saying 'No. We can't defeat them.'" The people who were not directly affected were prepared to believe Calev and Yehoshua and rely on the promises of the Ribono shel Olam.

A person without negiyus (personal motivation) can listen to a message and judge its merits without bias. All those people who believed the Meraglim did so because they had an agenda. Their agenda was "I don't want to fight." It is the old maxim "We hear what we want to hear and we believe what we want to believe."

Spending a Minute in the Beis HaMikdash Is All It Takes

The pasuk says, "And Yehoshua bin Nun and Calev ben Yefuneh from those who spied out the land (ha'tarim es ha'aretz) tore their clothes." (Bamidbar 14:6) I saw the following observation in the sefer Darash Mordechai: The term ha'tarim es ha'aretz is noteworthy. At this point in time, we already know that they were among the ones who "spied out the land." What then is the need for the Torah to again spell out the fact that they were "ha'tarim es ha'aretz"? We know all that already!

The Darash Mordechai relates this question to a very famous vort of the Ponevezher Rav. He tells the story of Yosef Meshisa. The pasuk says that when Yitzchak smelled the garments of Eisav (Vayarach es begadav) (Bereshis 27:27), the Medrash expounds: "he smelled the rebellious within him" (Vayarach es bogdav). Yitzchak even had nachas ruach (spiritual pleasure) from those people who were the traitors and rebelled against Hashem.

The Medrash then gives an example of such a rebellious person: Yosef Meshisa. He was a traitor to his people at the time of the destruction of the Second Bais Hamikdash (Temple). He went over the side of the Romans. The Medrash says that when the Romans destroyed the Beis HaMikdash, they went to Yosef Meshisa and (as a reward for his services to them) told him to go inside the Beis HaMikdash and take for himself whatever he wanted.

He went into the Beis HaMikdash and took out for himself the Golden Menorah. The Romans saw that and told him that this was too big of a gift. They then told him to take something else. The Menorah, they said, was fit for a king, not a commoner like himself. At that point, Yosef Meshisa refused. They urged him to go back and pick something else and he again refused.

To make a very long Medrash short, they tortured him and eventually killed him, but he still refused to go back and take a personal gift from the Beis HaMikdash's property.

The Ponevezher Rav asked a question: What happened to Yosef Meshisa? Previously, he was a traitor to his people. He was willing to walk into the Beis HaMikdash and take the Menorah for himself. That he was happy to do. No compunctions. Then, suddenly he is told, "No. You can't take the Menorah. That is not right for you to take." Suddenly, he became a Ba'al Teshuva? These are the bogdim (traitors) from whom Yitzchak Avinu received nachas ruach.

How did Yosef Meshisa turn around like that? The Ponevezher Rav explained that what happened to Yosef Meshisa was that he spent a minute in the Beis HaMikdash. When a person spends a minute in the Beis HaMikdash, it changes his life. The kedusha of the Beis HaMikdash was such that Yosef Meshisa was never the same. After that one minute in the Beis HaMikdash, he could not rebel ever again.

Such is the power of being exposed to the makom hamikdash. It is like radiation. A person can be exposed to radiation for literally ten seconds and it can have a profound effect on him. Such is the power of radiation, and l'havdil, such is the power of kedusha as well.

The Darash Mordechai concludes: Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon are crying, maybe the Meraglim will change their minds, maybe they will do teshuva. At that point, Yehoshua and Calev are described as those "who spied out the Land" (ha'tarim es ha'aretz). They gave up hope on the Meraglim doing teshuva. They realized: These people were in Eretz Yisrael. They were exposed to its holy sanctity. If after being exposed to Eretz Yisrael, they can still talk this way ("they are stronger than us, etc."), then Moshe Rabbeinu and Aaron, we hate to say this but nothing is going to help them. Your tefillos now will not save them either. They therefore tore their garments because they saw that the other Meraglim were hopeless and would never retract their report.

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Rabbi Yisroel Reisman's Weekly Chumash Shiur

1 – Topic – A Thought from Sefer Pachad Yitzchok

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Shelach. Parshas Shelach always brings out in Klal Yisrael a reminder of a need to have a true Ahavas Eretz Yisrael. The Nashim who had a true Ahavas Eretz Yisrael were not Nichshal in the Cheit of the Meraglim, Mashe'ain'kein the males of Klal Yisrael. I would like to talk a little about a Yesod from one of the Baalei Mussar.

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter (1809 - 1883) had B'ikkur three Talmidim. It is well-known that there were three major Talmidim. The Alter of Slabodka who went on to found the Yeshiva of Slabodka, the Alter of Kelm who founded the Yeshiva in Kelm, and the lesser known Reb Yitzchak Blaser or Rav Izele Peterburger (1837 - 1907) as he was known who went on to move to Eretz Yisrael and become one of the Gedolim of the old Yishuv in Eretz Yisrael. There is a Yesod that I would like to share with you from Rav Izele Peterburger. This is found in the "Mamarei" Pachad Yitzchok in the Pesach volume, Maimar Nun Vav (page 211). It is a very fascinating Yesod. He says there are times that a person does something because it is Ratzon Hashem and nevertheless is supposed to do it reluctantly, Derech Siruv. One example of this would be where a person finds himself Rachmana Litzlon forced to be Mechaleil Shabbos, so of course he is supposed to be Mechaleil Shabbos in a reluctant way and not in an eager joyous way. The idea of Hanhaga Derech Siruv is found in the story of Eliyahu in Har Hacarmel.

As you know, Eliyahu at Har Hacarmel performed an experiment or a test with the Ovdei Ha'bal in which both Eliyahu and the Kohanei Habal each brought their own Par, their own Korban, and there were two identical oxen. When one was chosen to be the ox of the Bal, the Gemara tells us that it was reluctant to go. It didn't want to go and it stood in its place. It told Eliyahu, the other ox and I are identical why should I be the one that is offered to the Bal. Eliyahu said between the two of you there will be a Kiddush Sheim Shamayim. Go! Yet the ox didn't go. The Posuk says that Eliyahu had to lift it up and carry it over to the Ovdei Habal. The question is, do you think the ox didn't trust the Psak of Eliyahu Hanavi?

So Rav Izele Peterburger sees in this a lesson. The Pesukim here in this very strange episode are coming to teach us something. Even though it was Ratzon Hashem for this animal to be brought as a Korban to the Bal,

nevertheless when it comes to it, the behavior should be a behavior Derech Siruv, a reluctant behavior. A person should not go to a situation that is a B'dieved situation, it is a situation that is not ideal, and in such a situation even though one is obligated to do it a person is supposed to do it B'derech Siruv, in a reluctant manner.

An example to this would be someone who has to discipline a student. If you remember, those who are my age or older, the old European Rabbeim who got a real gusto in giving a Patch to a Talmid. That behavior is not the behavior that we recommend. If someone has to give a Patch to a Talmid, it should be B'derech Siruv, it should be reluctantly. It shouldn't be done eagerly even though it is a Mitzvah for him to do it. The Rebbi decided that this is what the Talmid needs. Still it should be done reluctantly. Hanhaga B'derech Siruv.

We find that if someone asks you to be a Chazzan, you should say no once or twice before going up. Even though it is just a formula, to be reluctant to go up once or twice. Since you are going and taking the honor for yourself it should be Hanhaga, a behavior B'derech Siruv.

Rav Hutner sees in this Yesod an explanation of the behavior of Moshe Rabbeinu at the Sneh. Moshe Rabbeinu at the Sneh, first he asked HKB"H for directions. He asked what should I respond when they ask me who sent you. After receiving the directions, then he said as is found in Shemos 4:13 (שְׁלַח-נָא, בְּיַד-הַשְּׂלִיחַ). Send with somebody else, don't send me. Is that the behavior that HKB"H says go and the response is don't send me? It is very difficult to understand. The answer is that it is a Hanhaga Derech Siruv. It is a B'dieved behavior and since it is a B'dieved to go instead of Aharon and it is B'dieved to take the Kavod for yourself. Moshe Rabbeinu understood that he had to do it, but even when you have to do it, you are supposed to do it with a Hanhaga that is Derech Siruv. A reluctant type of a Hanhaga.

Rav Schwab used to repeat the story that occurred with him when he was learning in Mir and he needed money to travel home back to Germany for Bein Haz'manim. He borrowed money from Rav Yechezkel Levenstein the Mir Mashgiach. When Rav Schwab came back for the new Zman and paid back the Mashgiach he thanked Rav Yechezkel. Rav Chatzkel told him, it is Ribbis Devarim. A person is not supposed to say thank you for a loan. The next time there was a Bein Haz'manim he again borrowed money to go back to Germany and brought money back when he came for the new Zman. This time he did not say thank you. Rav Chatzkel asked him, where is the thank you? Rav Schwab said I am very confused. What does the Mashgiach mean where is the thank you, I was told that it is Assur to say thank you for a loan? Yes, but I don't see you struggling to hold yourself back from saying thank you. You are not supposed to say thank you, however, it should be done with reluctance. This is the Yesod.

I once heard a similar episode from Rav Pindrus who is one of the Roshei Yeshiva in Ohr Sameach. He was a Talmid of Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz. He told me that once there was a family need and he had to travel home in middle of the Zman. He asked Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz for Reshus. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz said to him in Yiddish, Ir Tut Nit Gain, you are not allowed to go. He said, okay. If that is the Psak I won't go. Then he called him back and he said, Ir Muz Gain, you have to go as your family needs you. He asked make up your mind. He said no. You have to go as your family needs you, but you should know when you go that Ir Tut Nit Gain, you are not supposed to be going. Then you can go.

Why do I mention all of this on the Shabbos of Parshas Shelach? I mention it because Klal Yisrael is in Galus. We have been in Galus for a very long time. We sometimes forget that Galus is a B'dieved. Galus is an Onesh. Galus is not where we belong. We belong in Eretz Yisrael. Those who make Galus into a Lechatchila, like the Meraglim they are Mevazeh Eretz Yisrael. People who go for vacation, they go to Europe, they go to Switzerland, they go to England, they go to Paris or London. What are they doing going to these places? They are Mevazeh Eretz Yisrael. There is no Cheishek, there is no Teshuka, there is no feeling. Now it may be, that in your life or my life it's the right thing to do, it is the Ratzon of Hashem. Our families are here, our Parnasa is here, our learning is here. Nevertheless, being in Galus has to

be a Hanhaga Derech Siruv, it has to be a B'dieved. If every moment in Galus you think of yourself as a B'dieved, then when the opportunity comes, Eretz Yisrael beckons, it calls you. Even when it doesn't come, the Ahavas Eretz Yisrael is there.

The Meraglim were not Mechavevai Eretz Yisrael. They didn't see the need to be in Eretz Yisrael. We could serve HKB"H where we are. It lacked a love, a feeling, that it was a B'dieved. Even to be a Dor Midbar eating Man, and surrounded by Ananei Hakavod, and being taught by Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon Hakohen, it is a B'dieved. You belong in Eretz Yisrael. That feeling is lacking. That feeling in our generation is missing. We need to have that Hergish we are in Galus, it is not where we belong. And that is an important thought that is very appropriate to review on Parshas Shelach. 2 – Topic – A Thought on what was done with the Fruit that the Meraglim brought back

Let me share with you something that a dear friend had sent me. The Meraglim brought from Eretz Yisrael grapes, a pomegranate and a fig. What did they do with it? He mentioned in the name of Rav Chaim Kanievsky in Taima Dik'ra. I believe that it is something that was said in one of these Shiurim a number of years ago, that the grapes that came back were used for the Nisach Hayayin, for the pouring of the wine on the Mizbaiach, and they brought every morning with the Korban Tamid the Nisach Hayayin, the Nesachim of wine. Rav Chaim in Taima Dik'ra says that these were Peiros of Eretz Yisrael. They were gigantic. They had enough wine to last for all the years in the Midbar to be used for the Nisach Hayayin. Well, that is a very holy use of the grapes. The question then became what about the pomegranate and the fig that came. What became of them? That is the question that I was asked.

I found in the Otzar Hachochmah B'sheim the Chiddushei Harim, that the fruits were brought as Bikkurim. An offering of Bikkurim for the Mizbaiach. So that, at least some of the grapes, pomegranate and fig were brought to be Mekayemei the Mitzvah of Bikkurim. There is a beautiful Remez to this in the first Mishnah of Perek Gimmel of Maseches Bikkurim. There is says (כיצד מפרישין את הביכורים: יורד אדם לתוך שדהו, ורואה תאנה שביכרה, אשכול שביכר, רימון (שביכר; וקושרין בגמי ואומר, הרי אלו ביכורים). It mentions only three of the seven Minim. Of course it means all of them, however, the three that are brought as an example guess what they are? (תאנה) the fig, (אשכול) the cluster of grapes, (רימון) the pomegranate. No coincidence that it mentions only these three. This is because these three are brought forever as a Tikun for the Cheit Mergalim and it is possible going with the idea that the grapes are used for a Mitzvah, that here too, the Chiddushei Harim says the fig and pomegranate were brought as Bikkurim and it was a Kiyum Mitzvah of Bikkurim once it returned. This serves to remind us once again that the Meraglim were great people that were Nichshal and did a terrible Aveira, but they were Baalei Madreiga.

And so, with this I wish everybody a wonderful Parshas Shelach, a meaningful Shabbos. I am hoping next Shabbos to be in Eretz Yisrael and looking for someone to Lain the entire Parshas Korach for me by Mincha so that I won't miss a Parsha. I haven't missed a Parsha on Shabbos Boruch Hashem in decades and I hope not to. HKB"H will send me the right Shaliach. Wishing everyone a wonderful Shabbos. Halevai all of Klal Yisrael should be in Eretz Yisrael next Shabbos and all the Chutz L'aretz people will be Laining Parshas Korach along with Parshas Chukas. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!

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OU Torah Rabbi Weinreb on Parsha
Shelach: The Blue Above the White
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

It may not sound like much of a story to you, but to me it was meaningful at many levels. I've heard the story three times now, each time from a different person. Each of the three went through a remarkably similar experience and

shared their story with me. I'd like to share the story with you, but some background will be necessary.

You must already have guessed that the background will derive from this week's Torah portion, Parshat Shelach (Numbers 13:1-15:41). At the very end of the parsha, we read:

"The Lord said to Moses, as follows: Speak to the people of Israel and instruct them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout all their generations; let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner. That shall be your fringe; look at it and recall all the commandments of the Lord and observe them, so that you do not follow your heart and eyes... Thus you shall be reminded to observe all My commandments and to be holy to your God..." (Numbers 15:37-40).

The Torah's word for "fringes" is tzitzit. This mitzvah is punctiliously kept by observant Jews to this very day, consistent with the verse's insistence that it is a practice mandated for "all their generations." The mitzvah entails affixing strings to four cornered garments, so that the strings hang loose. Jewish men wear these garments, and the stringent view, codified by the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 8:11), requires that the garment be worn above one's other clothing "so that one will constantly look at the tzitzit and thereby remember the commandments."

More lenient views allow the garment to be worn under one's other clothing, but still encourage the practice of letting the strings themselves protrude from one's clothing so that the wearer can see them, reflect upon them, and call to mind the Almighty's commandments. This is the practice of very many observant Jews nowadays.

Now we come to the story told to me by three young men who had identical experiences with these strings while wearing them in their everyday business settings. To my knowledge, these three men do not know each other and indeed dwell and work in communities geographically distant from each other.

Each of them approached me with his story, convinced that I would be especially interested in what had occurred to them. Each of them was approached, and I should emphasize respectfully approached, by a non-Jew, and each of them was asked if there was any significance to the strings protruding from their sweaters or shirts. Each of them replied that the strings had religious significance and that they wore them in keeping with a biblical command.

Each of them was surprised when the non-Jew immediately understood that this practice traced back to the Bible; in his words, to the Old Testament. Two of them even knew the chapter and verse of the passage in the Bible, quoted above. "Of course," they said, "these strings are the 'fringes' which must be attached to your garments."

All three "storytellers" were similarly taken aback by the expertise shown by their non-Jewish acquaintances and by their familiarity with "our" Bible. But none of the three stories ends quite here.

All of the three non-Jews then persisted to ask, "But where are the blue strings? Doesn't the Bible prescribe that a blue cord be attached at each corner? Where are your blue cords?"

The Torah's word for the "blue cord" is tekhelet. In Biblical times, and for centuries thereafter, one of the cords, and according to some opinions two of them, were dyed blue before being attached to the four-cornered garment. The dye was extracted from a sea creature known as the chilazon. Over the course of Jewish history, this practice was discontinued. It became difficult to procure this specific dye, and eventually the precise identity of this sea creature became unknown.

Two of my "storytellers" were able to share the reason for the absence of the blue cord with their non-Jewish questioners. One had to simply admit that he did not know why he did not keep the precise biblical command in his personal practice.

Permit me now to briefly tell you another story; namely, the story of the discovery of the identity of the sea creature, the recovery of the knowledge necessary to extract the dye from that creature, and the renewed ability to observe this mitzvah exactly as prescribed by the Torah, in the portion we

read this Shabbat. The story begins in the late 19th century with the efforts of Rabbi Gershon Henoch Leiner to travel to the museums and aquariums of the Mediterranean coast in search of the chilazon. He identified the creature as a subspecies of a squid, and his followers to this day derive the blue dye from this creature and color their tzitzit with it. However, rabbinic authorities of that time disagreed with this rabbi's opinion.

Closer to our time, the late Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Isaac Herzog, wrote his doctoral thesis on the topic of the identification of this sea creature and brilliantly defended his thesis: The chilazon was not a type of squid, but was rather a type of snail, known scientifically as the *murex trunculus*.

Even closer to our time, barely two decades ago, a group of Israeli scholars found a source in the ocean near Israel for this snail, and through a fascinating process too long to describe here, began to produce the dye and made tzitzit dyed blue available to the public. Nevertheless, a great number of rabbinic scholars remain unimpressed by these discoveries.

For a full description of this entire topic, one should consult the following website: www.tekhelet.com.

What was my response to the three "storytellers" and their tale? I chose not to share with them my own private reflection to the effect that had these three non-Jews met me, they would have found the blue cord of which they were informed by their own biblical study. Rather, I chose to share with the storytellers one of the explanations given for the blue cord.

This explanation is to be found in a book entitled *Sefer HaChinuch*, written by a medieval rabbi whose identity is uncertain. The book is an enumeration of all 613 Torah commandments, with an explanation given about the "root" of each command. By "root" he means, in contemporary terminology, the symbolic significance of the commandment. Here is what the author writes, in my own admittedly free translation:

"The underlying reason for this mitzvah is apparent. What can be a better reminder of God's commandments than an appendage attached to one's everyday apparel? But more than that, let us analyze the colors of the cords: blue and white. White is symbolic of the body, which our tradition (see *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* 3) teaches us was primordially created from the snow, which is white. Note too, that the body in its early embryonic stage resembles intertwined cords or strings (see *Tractate Niddah* 25b). The blue cord is reminiscent of the blue sky, of heaven, and is symbolic of all that is spiritual about mankind. Therefore, the blue cord is wound around the white to emphasize that ultimately, the soul is above, and the body is below; the soul is primary, and the body but secondary."

For those of us who wear tekhelet nowadays, and I am proud that I am among them, a powerful image that comes to our mind's eye every time we gaze upon our tzitzit is the image of a blue cord wound around a white one, and it is a constant reminder that our "white body" is best enveloped by our "blue soul," that our earthly selves must be subservient to our heavenly spirit.

Will the beautiful explanation given by the *Sefer HaChinuch* convince those who do not yet wear tekhelet to begin to do so? Perhaps not. But perhaps you, dear reader, with the addition of so many similar rabbinic passages available on the tekhelet.com website, will be convinced to add this new spiritual dimension to this important everyday mitzvah.

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb is Executive Vice President, Emeritus of the Orthodox Union, following more than seven years as Executive Vice President. In that role, he combined the skills of pulpit rabbi, scholar, and clinical psychologist to provide extraordinary leadership to the organization and to Orthodox Judaism worldwide...

From: Torah Lectures <torahlectures@blog.wixnotifications.com> Sent: Thursday, June 8, 2023 Subject: New post in Torah Lectures

Parshas (B'haaloscha) Shelach 5783

A short message from Rav Elimelech Biderman Shlita

A Gutten Erev Shabbos Parshas Shelach!

In this week's Parsha, when the spies returned, they said as follows ו we felt like grasshoppers compared to them – the giants, and the giants too viewed us as grasshoppers. The Midrash says, that Hashem said that for I can

forgive, but for – that the giants viewed you as grasshoppers, for that I won't forgive. Why? Because maybe I made you seem like angels in the eyes of the giants.

The Sfas Emes asks on this, that the Gemara in Sotah (35a) which Rashi brings down states, that they spies heard the giants talking amongst themselves saying little creatures are strolling in the vineyard). If so, why did Hashem expect them to assume that the giants viewed them as angels when they heard directly from the giants how they viewed them?

The Sfas Emes answers a fascinating answer: The way people view a person, is dependent on how that person feels about himself. If a person holds himself to be a grasshopper, then that's how others will view him and that's what he'll hear others saying about him, and therefore they only heard the giants saying that they're grasshoppers because that's how they viewed themselves.

To understand this better, let's say over a story: A Yungerman was learning in Kollel, and he felt that no one would come over to him to speak in learning; and with mundane matters too, he wasn't included in the conversation. And the same was outside in the street, no one ever approached him to ask for directions, and no child asked him to cross him the street. And in his apartment building too, while by the staircases no neighbors would speak to him. Even in his own house, his family just wouldn't talk to him. One day, he saw an advertisement that they're selling hats. His hat already saw generations of Tzadikim... So, he decided to go there and buy a new hat. When he came in, they told him that it costs a lot, but he agreed to pay whatever it costs. They measured him, and found him a beautiful hat. He paid for it, and thought to himself, "instead of carrying the new hat home in the box, let me leave my old hat behind, and start wearing the new hat already"; and that's what he did.

Wondrously, he stepped out into the street, and someone approaches him and asks "How do I get to this-and-this Shul?" A block down, a child came over to him and asked him to cross him the street. He came into his building, and the neighbors greet him warmly and ask him "What's doing?" He comes into his house, and his family jumps to greet him, asking him "What's going on?" So, he pointed upwards intending to show them his new hat, but they didn't understand what he's saying. He pointed again, but they still didn't understand. When he pointed a third time, they started pointing to their foreheads saying "something's off..." Until he finally explained to them that he got a new hat. They reply "we don't see any new hat!" He removes his hat, and behold it was his old one. He had in mind to leave his old hat behind and wear the new one, while by mistake he left the new hat behind and wore his old hat. Nevertheless, everyone began talking to him! What changed? You know what changed? Not his hat, but his head, his mindset. Thinking that he's wearing a new hat, he felt good about himself, and others felt it too, and that's why they began talking to him.

The Possuk in this week's Parsha says Vayivchu Ha'am Ba'laila Ha'hu and Chazal tell us, that because they cried a senseless cry on that night, therefore that night was established as a "night of crying". The Imrei Emes says, that the lesson from this is, that if a senseless cry causes crying for generations, then surely being happy for no reason causes happiness for generations! What's the meaning of being happy for no reason? Just being happy by strengthening oneself with faith in Hashem!

For a conclusion: The Possuk says in this week's Parsha Vayikra Moshe Li'Hoshea bin Nun Yehoshua. Explains the Rebbe R' Heinoch, that Moshe Rabbeinu saw this Yungerman who constantly cried out to Hashem for all of his needs, for money, Chavrusos, health and so on; so, Moshe Rabbeinu said Vayikra Moshe Li'Hoshea bin Nun Yehoshua. – The person who constantly calls out to Hashem for salvations, Ye'Hoshua – he will surely merit a salvation. This, he says, is a piece of advice for every Jew, to train himself that whenever he needs something, he should cry out to Hashem. One doesn't have to be isolated and adorned with Tallis and Tefilin to do this, rather even in the street, after making sure that the place is clean and pure, when he cries out to Hashem he will surely be helped! Have a joyous Shabbos!

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from: Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klalgovoah.org> date: Jun 15, 2023, 7:02 PM
subject: Tidbits for Parashas Shelach
In memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz z"l

This week is Shabbos Mevorchim Chodesh Tamuz. Rosh Chodesh is on Monday and Tuesday, June 19th and 20th. The molad is Sunday afternoon at 3:36 PM and 15 chalakim.

Eretz Yisrael remains one Parashah ahead and will lein Parashas Korach this week.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Wednesday night, June 21st. The final opportunity is late Sunday night, July 2nd at 3:37 AM EDT.

Daf Yomi - Friday: Bavli: Gittin 31 • Yerushalmi: Demai 48 • Mishnah

Yomis: Yoma 6:7-8 • Oraysa: Rosh Hashanah 7b & 8a

בְּמִסְפַּר הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר־תִּרְתָּם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם לְשָׁנָה יוֹם לְשָׁנָה תִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם
אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם לְשָׁנָה Like the number of the days that you spied out the land, forty days, a day for a year, a day for a year, you shall bear your iniquities forty years (Bamidbar 14:34)

Bnei Yisrael were punished with wandering in the desert for forty years, corresponding to the forty days that the Meraglim traversed the land and returned with a bad report on Eretz Yisrael. Although the lashon hara spoken against Eretz Yisrael was certainly wrong, it was spoken only upon their return. Why, then, was the punishment correspondent to the days they spent within Eretz Yisrael?

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l answers that we learn from here that not only is lashon hara forbidden in speech, it is even forbidden to think and contemplate negative thoughts about a fellow Jew. Rashi (13:26) writes that the Meraglim's negative intentions were present from the time they entered the land. Therefore, the sin of lashon hara in the form of negative thoughts was in fact present for all forty days. Rav Elya Baruch Finkel zt"l expounds further with the words of the Chofetz Chaim who writes that the underlying sin of lashon hara is the ayin ra - an evil eye with which one views his fellow negatively. This negative outlook is what causes one to develop negative views regarding a fellow Jew. The noted mechaneches, Reb. B. David a"h, would tell her students that our hashkafos and feelings are also "lemaysa" and practical in nature, as they guide our actions and practice. One must be careful about thoughts in mind and heart in order to cultivate positive words and deeds.

Haftorah Commentary Parshas Shlach Rabbi Dovid Siegel

<rd siegel@torah.org> Thu, Jun 15, 5:31 PM (7 hours ago)

Yehoshua 2:1 This week's haftorah reveals to us the power of perfect faith and the miraculous events that can result from such inner strength. The haftorah begins with Yehoshua, the newly appointed successor to Moshe Rabbeinu, sending two special individuals on a secret mission to investigate the land of Israel. The Jewish people were situated directly outside the Promised Land and Yehoshua wished to determine the most strategic point from which to enter the land. The mission was quite dangerous being that the Canaanite inhabitants were well aware of the impending Jewish threat on their land.

Yehoshua instructed the spies to survey all of Eretz Yisroel, placing special focus on the entry point of Yericho. The spies crossed over the Jordan River and proceeded directly to the first inn inside the city's wall, the house of Rachav. Their entry was immediately discovered by the King of Yericho who sent a strong message to Rachav demanding the surrender of the intruders. Out of the goodness of her heart, Rachav responded to the king's request by engaging herself in a remarkable act of heroism. She quickly concealed the spies and then persuaded the king's messengers that the spies had left her house and exited the city. When the messengers were totally out of sight she immediately revealed to the spies that the inhabitants of the land were awestricken by the anticipated invasion of the Jewish people. She

added that she personally believed Hashem to be in absolute control of the entire universe and that he could easily defeat all who stand in His way. Our Chazal (Yalkut Shimoni, Yehoshua 8) reflect upon this most unusual experience and its stark contrast to the disheartening experience of the spies in this week's parsha. This week we read about ten of the Jewish people's greatest men who went on a similar mission to survey Eretz Yisroel. Yet the results of their mission were quite different and ultimately persuaded the Jewish people to seriously reject Eretz Yisroel. Chazal point to the fundamental distinction between these two groups of spies. They explain that the spies in the time of Yehoshua were totally devoted to their mission and therefore met enormous success. This implies that the spies in the days of Moshe Rabbeinu were remiss in their perfect commitment to their mission. Due to this weakness their perception regarding the land was prone to be subjective and they were naturally overwhelmed by their awesome experiences in the land. Conversely, the spies in Yehoshua's times were totally committed to their mission and were therefore amply prepared to overcome any obstacle in their way.

In truth, the land of Israel presented extraordinary challenges for the Jewish people. The inhabitants of the land were far from friendly to their Jewish invaders and it was evident that nothing short of an open miracle could secure the safety of the Jewish nation. The spies in Moshe's times displayed grave concern over this dangerous plight. They observed the towering stature of the giants in the land and the total preoccupation of its inhabitants in eulogies and funerals. Unfortunately, the original spies succumbed to their well-grounded fears and eventually forfeited their privilege to enter the land. The second group of spies however possessed perfect faith and total commitment. With such inner strength they were not influenced by any of their frightening experiences and faithfully fulfilled their mission. This stark contrast serves as a profound lesson in perfect faith and trust in Hashem. From a practical standpoint Yehoshua's spies had no realistic chance to succeed and faced almost immediate guaranteed death. The Jewish nation had been camped within earshot of Eretz Yisroel and a secret mission like theirs was prone to be discovered. Although our Chazal (see Yalkut Shimoni ibid.) do tell us that the spies disguised themselves as travelling salesmen it is quite difficult to fathom that such pious men could truly pass as Canaanites. The only real thing they had going for themselves was their steadfast faith and trust in Hashem. They bravely entered the "lion's den" and decided to lodge in the home of Rachav, a dear contact of all of the country's highest ranking officials. She was fondly known throughout the land and enjoyed a warm personal association with all the authorities. In fact, the results were exactly as could be predicted and the spies were immediately detected upon entry.

However, when one possesses perfect faith in Hashem the events which follow are far from predictable. Our Chazal (see Yalkut ad loc. 9) reveal to us a most startling demonstration of Divine Providence and inform us that Rachav, unbeknown to the spies, had recently embraced the Jewish religion. In fact, Hashem had actually directed the spies to the only Jewish soul in the entire land of Canaan. The faith of the spies proved rewarding and instead of surrendering the spies to the king, Rachav extended herself in every way to assist her newly embraced Jewish brethren. She greatly encouraged them with her profound statements of faith and actually became a catalyst for the deliverance of the Promised Land directly into Jewish hands. The Yalkut informs us that Rachav was favorably rewarded for her heroism and merited to marry the Jewish nation's leader Yehoshua and became the forebear of many Jewish prophets and priests. Instead of almost guaranteed death for the spies their perfect faith produced a most successful mission resulting in the deliverance of the land of Canaan into Jewish hands. This is but a sample of the incredible results of perfect faith and total commitment to Hashem. From here we see that when one follows the path of Hashem with perfect faith and trust there is no limit to the unpredictable results and success that Hashem brings about. Let it be the will of Above that our constant strides in faith and commitment serve as the special merit for us to finally return to our homeland in peace and harmony very soon.

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from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> via date: Jun 8, 2023, 11:03 AM subject: Torah Musings Daily Digest for 06/08/2023

Tzitzit and Spies by R. Gidon Rothstein

Parshat Shelach

Seeing tzitzit will remind a Jew of all the mitzvot of the Torah, the verse says, without explaining how. Kli Yakar offers two options, each interesting. His first requires two pieces of background, one better known than the other. The Similar Colors of Tekhelet, Sea, and Sky Menachot 43b more famously says tekhelet—the bluish string we are to include with the white ones, whose identity was lost for centuries but, thank God, seems to have been found in our times—is similar to the sea, the sea to the sky, the sky to the kisei ha-kavod, I think usually translated as Throne of Glory.

Kli Yakar dismisses the possibility these colors fully match, because tekhelet certainly doesn't match the sky exactly, although I don't know how he was so sure. My guess is he was more confident the sea wasn't sky-blue, it was reminiscent of sky blue. Similarity draws our attention to those parts of the world; looking at tekhelet turns our attention to the sea, from there to the sky, but so what?

The Sea and the Sky, Serving God in Fear and Love

He offers another Midrash to explain. Sifrei, also cited in Yalkut Ha'azinu 542, envisions Hashem having Moshe tell the people to look at the sky Hashem had created to serve them. It never changes its dimensions, the sun never rises in the west. The Midrash quotes a verse to show the sky is happy to do it.

The sea also sticks to the realms given it, only here tradition inferred submission to a Greater Will, staying in its area out of yir'a, fear or awe. If they do so, when they have no deep understanding, all the more should we, the Midrash says.

As we look at our tekhelet, Kli Yakar thinks the two sources teach us, we remember the sea, remember to serve God out of fear, instilling a deep care and concern with not going wrong. From there, we move to thinking of the sky, serving out of love (a service Kli Yakar says will translate into enjoying the component actions of service, not only the avoidance of doing or going wrong).

From those two, we progress to thinking of God directly, fear and love reading us for the highest service. A process sparked by the tekhelet's blue. Mitzvot Bring on Mitzvot

Alternatively or perhaps additionally, tekhelet might remind us of mitzvot based on Kohelet 9;8's metaphor of clothing for our mitzvah observance.

Most garments need many strings woven together, says Kli Yakar, but a "garment" for the soul can start with just one string, one mitzvah.

Avot 4;2 says mitzvah goreret mitzvah, one mitzvah causes another, a phrase Kli Yakar is sure indicates a covenant, by which I think he means something metaphysical. God has guaranteed us that taking on one mitzvah will put us on a path to more. Adding to his claim, he says the one performance, since it has the potential to expand, counts as if the Jew has already fulfilled them all, at least in terms of the experience of seeing the tekhelet string.

The one string alerts us to the power of every mitzvah, any one able to move us from being spiritually bare to being fully clothed, one bringing all, in potential.

Two ways the tekhelet starts us on the road to all the mitzvot, the "reminder" Kli Yakar takes the verse to intend.

When and What God Forgave

After the sin of the spies, God commits to forgiving kidvarekha, as Moshe had said; Chatam Sofer relates it to a discussion of Tosafot Yevamot 72a. The Gemara there said the Jews did not merit the healing north wind (and did not circumcise their children) all the time in the desert because they were

nezufim, shunned/excommunicated from God. Rashi says the sin of the Golden Calf led to this state, surprising Tosafot, because God seemed to forgive the Jews.

They instead argue the Jews were shunned after the sin of the spies, in our parsha.

The Meaning of “Lekha, To You”

Of course, Chatam Sofer points out Hashem actually did say *salachti kidvarekha*, like your words, in our parsha, Bamidbar 14:20. Chizkuni argued Hashem was here forgiving the sin of the Golden Calf fully, without explaining why Hashem would refer back to that sin. Chatam Sofer has a theory.

Moshe defended the Jews in our parsha by arguing that punishing them as they deserved would backfire, would sacrilege God’s Name by giving the impression God had taken the Jews out of Egypt only to destroy them, “unable” to follow through on the promise to bring them to Israel.

The theory founders on first words of our parsha, *shelach lekha*, understood to mean Hashem made it Moshe’s choice, God was neither commanding nor prohibiting, leaving no way to “blame” it on God. On the other hand, perhaps *lekha* is just how the language works, in which case the Jews would be again safe.

Unfortunately, Moshe had previously protected the Jews from the full consequences of the sin of the Golden Calf with that very argument.

According to Shemot Rabba 47:9, Moshe had said the Jews could not be blamed for worshipping the Golden Calf because the *Aseret Ha-Dibberot* said *lo yihye lekha*, you shall not have, a word Moshe argued applied to him alone.

Salakhti kidvarekha, Chatam Sofer suggests Chizkuni would read, means I forgave the sin of the Golden Calf based on your reading of *lekha*, it means you alone. Applied to *shelach lekha*, means it was the Jews’ choice, and there can be no worry for *chillul Hashem*. Tosafot could say they were *nezufim*, in excommunication, because of the sin of the spies, despite God’s apparent statement forgiving them.

Some sin of the Jews left a mark throughout their time in the desert. For Rashi, it was the Golden Calf, despite Hashem having them build the Mishkan and enshrining the Divine Presence there. For Tosafot, it was the spies, because, says Chatam Sofer, *lekha* is “to you,” God having in no way endorsed sending them.

Or, It’s the Difference Between Natural and Not

Ha’amek Davar offers another way to deal with “*lekha*.” He starts with the insistence *shelach* must mean a command. Yet Moshe presents the story in *Devarim* as if it was the Jews’ initiative, so *Ha’amek Davar* needs to reconcile the two.

Ramban starts him off, by articulating a valid reason to send spies, the ordinary human need to know how to conquer a land most effectively (the version in *Devarim* does not have the Jews asking whether the land is good or not, Ramban pointed out, it asked for the ways and routes to take to conquer the land). Such information is indispensable if the Jews are conquering Israel naturally (with God’s help, but within the laws of nature). Were the Jews going to continue to enjoy supernatural protection from God, as they had throughout their time in the desert, the spies would be unneeded. *Ha’amek Davar* thinks the last three stops on the Jews’ travels had daunted them, made them aware of their precarious situation, how any time they complained against or about God it would be directly in His ears, as it were, could bring immediate and serious punishment. Unable or unwilling to bear the pressure, they chose to shift to natural conquest, needing spies.

He adds an idea I find very intriguing. Moshe had told the people God spoke to them *panim be-panim*, literally face to face, but *Netziv* says it also means God promised to deal with them the way they chose. They could choose more direct providence, with its advantages and dangers, or the natural version of providence.

Tzitzit take us in a good direction, in one of two ways, and there were two possibilities about how the *lekha* of the second word of the parsha shaped

our understanding of the sin of the spies, sandwiching this parsha with insight of *Kli Yakar*, *Chatam Sofer*, and *Ha’amek Davar*.

from: **The Rabbi Sacks Legacy** <info@rabbisacks.org> date: Jun 15, 2023, 10:44 AM subject: Two Kinds of Fear 📖 (Shelach Lecha)

Two Kinds of Fear

SHELACH LECHA

NOTE: Israel’s Torah reading cycle is currently one week ahead of the rest of the Jewish world. If you are currently residing in Israel, and wish to receive the emails according to Israel’s Torah reading cycle, please update your preferences using the bottom of this email, or email us to let us know.

With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship of Covenant & Conversation, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel.

An extraordinary couple who have moved me beyond measure by the example of their lives. "I have loved the Torah of R' Chaim Schimmel ever since I first encountered it. It strives to be not just about truth on the surface but also its connection to a deeper truth beneath. Together with Anna, his remarkable wife of 60 years, they built a life dedicated to love of family, community, and Torah." – Rabbi Sacks

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One of the most powerful addresses I ever heard was given by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, on this week’s parsha: the story of the spies. For me, it was nothing less than life-changing. He asked the obvious questions. How could ten of the spies have come back with a demoralising, defeatist report? How could they say, we cannot win, the people are stronger than us, their cities are well fortified, they are giants and we are grasshoppers?

They had seen with their own eyes how God had sent a series of plagues that brought Egypt, the strongest and longest-lived of all the empires of the ancient world, to its knees. They had seen the Egyptian army with its cutting-edge military technology, the horse-drawn chariot, drown in the Reed Sea while the Israelites passed through it on dry land. Egypt was far stronger than the Canaanites, Perrizites, Jebusites, and other minor kingdoms that they would have to confront in conquering the land. Nor was this an ancient memory. It had happened not much more than a year before.

What is more, they already knew that, far from being giants confronting grasshoppers, the people of the land were terrified of the Israelites. They had said so themselves in the course of singing the Song at the Sea:

The peoples have heard; they tremble; Pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; Trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. Terror and dread fall upon them; Because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone.

Ex. 15:14-16 The people of the land were afraid of the Israelites. Why then were the spies afraid of them?

What is more, continued the Rebbe, the spies were not people plucked at random from among the population. The Torah states that they were “all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel.” They were leaders. They were not people given lightly to fear.

The questions are straightforward, but the answer the Rebbe gave was utterly unexpected. The spies were not afraid of failure, he said. They were afraid of success.

What was their situation now? They were eating manna from heaven. They were drinking water from a miraculous well. They were surrounded by Clouds of Glory. They were camped around the Sanctuary. They were in continuous contact with the Shechinah. Never had a people lived so close to God.

What would be their situation if they entered the land? They would have to fight battles, maintain an army, create an economy, farm the land, worry about whether there would be enough rain to produce a crop, and all the

other thousand distractions that come from living in the world. What would happen to their closeness to God? They would be preoccupied with mundane and material pursuits. Here they could spend their entire lives learning Torah, lit by the radiance of the Divine. There they would be no more than one more nation in a world of nations, with the same kind of economic, social and political problems that every nation has to deal with.

The spies were not afraid of failure. They were afraid of success. Their mistake was the mistake of very holy men. They wanted to spend their lives in the closest possible proximity to God. What they did not understand was that God seeks, in the Hasidic phrase, “a dwelling in the lower worlds”. One of the great differences between Judaism and other religions is that while others seek to lift people to heaven, Judaism seeks to bring heaven down to earth.

Much of Torah is about things not conventionally seen as religious at all: labour relations, agriculture, welfare provisions, loans and debts, land ownership and so on. It is not difficult to have an intense religious experience in the desert, or in a monastic retreat, or in an ashram. Most religions have holy places and holy people who live far removed from the stresses and strains of everyday life. There was one such Jewish sect in Qumran, known to us through the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there were certainly others. About this there is nothing unusual at all.

But that is not the Jewish project, the Jewish mission. God wanted the Israelites to create a model society where human beings were not treated as slaves, where rulers were not worshipped as demigods, where human dignity was respected, where law was impartially administered to rich and poor alike, where no one was destitute, no one was abandoned to isolation, no one was above the law and no realm of life was a morality-free zone. That requires a society, and a society needs a land. It requires an economy, an army, fields and flocks, labour and enterprise. All these, in Judaism, become ways of bringing the Shechinah into the shared spaces of our collective life. The spies feared success, not failure. It was the mistake of deeply religious men. But it was a mistake.

That is the spiritual challenge of the greatest event in two thousand years of Jewish history: the return of Jews to the land - and State - of Israel. Perhaps never before and never since has there been a political movement accompanied by so many dreams as Zionism. For some it was the fulfilment of prophetic visions, for others the secular achievement of people who had decided to take history into their own hands. Some saw it as a Tolstoy-like reconnection with land and soil, others a Nietzschean assertion of will and power. Some saw it as a refuge from European antisemitism, others as the first flowering of messianic redemption. Every Zionist thinker had his or her version of utopia, and to a remarkable degree they all came to pass. But Israel always was something simpler and more basic. Jews have known virtually every fate and circumstance between tragedy and triumph in the almost four thousand years of their history, and they have lived in almost every land on earth. But in all that time there only ever was one place where they could do what they were called on to do from the dawn of their history: to build their own society in accord with their highest ideals, a society that would be different from their neighbours and become a role model of how a society, an economy, an educational system and the administration of welfare could become vehicles for bringing the Divine presence down to earth.

It is not difficult to find God in the wilderness, if you do not eat from the labour of your hands and if you rely on God to fight your battles for you. Ten of the spies, according to the Rebbe, sought to live that way forever. But that, suggested the Rebbe, is not what God wants from us. He wants us to engage with the world. He wants us to heal the sick, feed the hungry, fight injustice with all the power of law, and combat ignorance with universal education. He wants us to show what it is to love the neighbour and the stranger, and say, with Rabbi Akiva, “Beloved is humanity because we are each created in God’s image.”

Jewish spirituality lives in the midst of life itself, the life of society and its institutions. To create it we have to battle with two kinds of fear: fear of

failure, and fear of success. Fear of failure is common; fear of success is rarer but no less debilitating. Both come from the reluctance to take risks. Faith is the courage to take risks. It is not certainty; it is the ability to live with uncertainty. It is the ability to hear God saying to us as He said to Abraham, “Walk on ahead of Me” (Gen. 17:1).

The Rebbe lived what he taught. He sent emissaries out to virtually every place on earth where there were Jews. In so doing, he transformed Jewish life. He knew he was asking his followers to take risks, by going to places where the whole environment would be challenging in many ways, but he had faith in them and in God and in the Jewish mission whose place is in the public square where we share our faith with others and do so in deeply practical ways.

It is challenging to leave the desert and go out into the world with all its trials and temptations, but that is where God wants us to be, bringing His spirit to the way we run an economy, a welfare system, a judiciary, a health service, and an army, healing some of the wounds of the world and bringing, to places often shrouded in darkness, fragments of Divine light.

from: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabbiyy@theyeshiva.net> date: Jun 15, 2023, 3:45 PM subject: Dance to the Beat of Creativity - Essay by Rabbi YY Dance to the Beat of Creativity

Why Were the Spies Condemned for Reporting the Facts?

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer. -- General Montgomery

The Hole in the Roof

A rabbi stands before his congregation and reports to them that a massive hole has been found in the roof of the synagogue.

"Now I have good news and bad news for you," the Rabbi continues. "The good news is that we have the money to repair it; the bad news is that the money is in your pockets."

If We Win?

It's an old anecdote. Years ago, the Israeli parliament, or Knesset, convened an emergency session to figure out a solution for the Israeli economy.

One brilliant minister said, "Let's declare war on the U.S., and then, in the wake of the utter destruction America will bring upon us, we will receive billions of dollars for reconstruction, like Germany and Japan."

"Sounds great," responded another member of the Knesset. "One problem: What will we do if we win the war?"

Twelve Jews on a Mission

This week's portion, Shlach, tells the story of 12 men who were dispatched by Moses from the desert to go and survey the Land of Canaan and its inhabitants. The purpose of their journey was to prepare the Jewish people for the subsequent conquest and settlement of the Land.[1]

Upon discharging the spies on their mission, Moses presented them with a list of questions they needed to answer. "See the Land," Moses said to them. "How is it? And the nations that dwell in it—are they strong or weak? Are they few or numerous? And how is the land in which they dwell—is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they dwell—are they open or are they fortified?"

When the twelve spies returned from their 40-day tour of Israel they presented to the people a report of their findings.

"We arrived at the Land to which you sent us," the spies said, "and indeed it flows with milk and honey and this is its fruit. But the people that dwell in the land are powerful, the cities are greatly fortified and we also saw the offspring of the giants. We cannot ascend to that people for it is too strong for us," they proclaimed.

The report demoralized the Jewish nation and drained it of the motivation to enter the Land. As a result, the spies died, and much of the generation died in the desert, never making it into the Promised Land. Only 39 years later, in the year 1276 B.C.E., did the children and grandchildren of this generation cross the borders and settle in the Promised Land.

Kill the Messenger?

One of the many questions raised by biblical commentators [2] concerns the reason for the spies being condemned to punishment. Moses gave them a detailed list of questions about the Land; he instructed them to make their own observations as to what will await the people upon their arrival. This is exactly what the spies did. They came back with an answer to all of Moses' questions and reported what they perceived to be the reality. If Moses expected them to cover up their observations -- that the Land was inhabited by mighty men and its cities were greatly fortified -- he should have never sent them in the first place!

Why were the men faulted for relating what they had seen? Is this not a case of "kill the messenger?"

Introducing Paralysis

The answer is that if the spies had merely related to Moses and to the people the reality of the situation as they saw it, everything would have been fine. But they did more than that. They used the difficulties they observed as an excuse to capitulate in the face of fear.

Had the spies returned and said, "Hey guys, we have seen a mighty people and well-protected cities in the Land, so now we need to devise an effective strategy of how to go about our challenging mission," they would have fulfilled their task flawlessly. The moment they responded to the obstacles by saying "We cannot do it anymore," they swayed an entire people to abandon their G-d-given destiny.

The spies are condemned for substituting the legitimate and important question "How will we do it?" with the despairing and helpless conclusion, "We can never do it!"

Conquering Your Darkness

Each of us has a domain in our life that needs to be conquered, a terrain that needs to be transformed into a "holy land." Some of us need to confront trauma, fear, insecurity, temptation, addiction, or shame. We must confront challenges within our psyches, our marriages, and our families. Since the challenges that lay in recovery's path are at times frightening, we are naturally tempted to believe that we are incapable of overcoming our darkness and we surrender to the obstacles.

The feeling is understandable, but if you surrender to it, it will rob you of the opportunity to liberate your life and arrive at your personal "Promised Land." The option of resignation compels you to remain stuck in a barren desert made up of the stuff of shame and despair.

The question ought not to be, "Can I do it?" Because that's the question coming from my inner sense of incompetence. G-d conceived you in love, and the day you were born is the day He declared that the world is incomplete without you. As the saying goes, sometimes when you find yourself in a dark place you think you've been buried, but you've actually been planted. The resources to repair the "hole in our personal roof" are present. I am empowered to leave my wilderness and discover my light, joy, and wholeness. G-d has sent me into each of my life's journeys with the power to bring light into my darkness and discover my own inner infinity, as a Divine ambassador of love, light, healing, and hope.

The story of the spies is our personal story. My trauma tells me, "I can't," and I have all the emotional evidence and data to support my conclusions. But with lots of empathy and faith in my inner Divine self, I can discover a deeper untarnished, unfeared core that has the power to say: I can, and I will; now let me figure out how. I want to dance to the beat of creativity and connection, not despair to the beat of survival and loneliness.

Ask not "whether," but rather "how." [3]

[1]Numbers chapters 13-14. [2] Nachmanides in his commentary on the opening verses of the portion. [3] This essay is based on an address I heard from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shabbos Parshas Shlach, 21 Sivan, 5749 (June 24, 1989), published in Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 2. Cf. Likkutei Sichos vol. 13 pp. 39-41. For other answers to the above question, see Likkutei Sichos vol. 18 Shlach 1, and many references that are noted there.

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TORAH SHORTS: Shelach 5783 Weekly Biblical Thoughts Commentary based on the Bat Ayin

By **Rabbi Ben-Tzion Spitz** Choosing Yokes (Shelach) The more you depend on forces outside yourself, the more you are dominated by them. - Harold Sherman Moses sends twelve princes of Israel to spy out the land of Canaan, the land God promised to the nation of Israel. Ten of the twelve spies come back with a frightening, negative report that sows panic amongst the people. God is furious with this development and tells Moses he will destroy the nation and start anew with just Moses and his descendants. Moses successfully intercedes and God diminishes the decree from outright destruction to instead have the cowardly, faithless population wander in the desert for forty years. The next generation will be the ones to conquer Canaan. The Bat Ayin on Numbers 14:17 explains that part of the failure of the generation of the desert was their lack of faith in God. They believed in the superficial strength of their enemies and did not believe in the supernatural powers that God had already demonstrated with the ten plagues of Egypt, the splitting of the sea and the numerous other miracles they experienced in the desert. By accepting and fearing the mundane reality of the physical strength of their enemies, they in a sense neutralized God's possible intervention. The Bat Ayin explains that the converse is also true. By accepting God's strength, God's power, God's desire and ability to intervene in our lives, by accepting what the Sages call "the Yoke of Heaven," we neutralize and overcome our mundane, physical adversaries. By becoming full-fledged subjects of God's monarchy, we throw off the yoke of earthly monarchies and overlords. Not only are political rulers nullified, but somehow even the chains and burdens of a livelihood are lifted. The dictum of the Sages states: "Whoever accepts upon themselves the yoke of Heaven, they have lifted from them the yoke of rulers and the yoke of livelihood." The Bat Ayin adds that a particularly strong expression of accepting the Yoke of Heaven is by keeping the Sabbath, based on the liturgy: "They will be joyous in Your Kingship, the keepers of the Sabbath." Keeping the Sabbath is a clear and obvious demonstration of one's fealty to God and His directives. By choosing God as our ultimate and only ruler we may free ourselves from the clutches of political rulers and economic control. May we remember who is the One that is really in charge. Shabbat Shalom, Ben-Tzion Dedication In memory of Ori Yitzhak Iluz, Ohad Dahan and Lia Ben Nun who were killed on the Egyptian border. May God comfort their families among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem. -----

Fw From Hamelaket@gmail.com

from: **Ohr Somayach** <ohr@ohr.edu> date: Jun 8, 2023, 11:00 AM

Torah Weekly - Parshat - Shlach Lecha

by **Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair** - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

PARSHA OVERVIEW At the insistence of the Bnei Yisrael, and with G-d's permission, Moshe sends 12 scouts, one from each tribe, to investigate Canaan. Anticipating trouble, Moshe changes Hoshea's name to Yehoshua, expressing a prayer that G-d not let him fail in his mission. They return 40 days later, carrying unusually large fruit. When 10 of the 12 state that the people in Canaan are as formidable as the fruit, the men are discouraged. Calev and Yehoshua, the only two scouts still in favor of the invasion, try to bolster the people's spirit. The nation, however, decides that the Land is not worth the potentially fatal risks, and instead demands a return to Egypt. Moshe's fervent prayers save the nation from Heavenly annihilation. However, G-d declares that they must remain in the desert for 40 years until the men who wept at the scouts' false report pass away. A remorseful group rashly begins an invasion of the Land, based on G-d's original command. Moshe warns them not to proceed, but they ignore this and are massacred by the Amalekites and Canaanites. G-d instructs Moshe concerning the offerings to be made when the Bnei Yisrael will finally enter the Land. The people are commanded to remove challah, a gift for the kohanim, from their dough. The laws for an offering after an inadvertent sin, for an individual or a group, are explained. However, should someone blaspheme against G-d and be unrepentant, he will be cut off spiritually from his people. One man is

found gathering wood on public property in violation of the laws of Shabbat and he is executed. The laws of tzitzit are taught. We recite the section about the tzitzit twice a day to remind ourselves of the Exodus.

PARSHA INSIGHTS Double Agents in a Minyan This week's Torah portion teaches the grave sin of the meraglim, the spies. Their evil report about Eretz Yisrael still echoes today, with the repercussions continuing to be felt. Of the twelve spies sent, only two remained loyal to Hashem: Yehoshua bin Nun and Calev ben Yefuneh. The other ten chose to slander Eretz Yisrael, consequently suffering immediate and terrible deaths. Due to their vile report, the Jewish people was forced to remain in the desert an additional forty years, and eventually die out, before the children ultimately were allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael. Hashem called this rogues' gallery of spies an eidah, literally a congregation. The gemara derives from this incident that the minimum requirement for a minyan isa quorum of ten men, since there were ten turncoat 'double-agents' who were contemptuously called a congregation. If ten men can get together to conspire and hatch malevolent schemes, then ten men can assemble to form a congregation for devarim shebekedusha, matters of holiness. This exegesis is duly codified in halacha, and all because of the dastardly deeds of ten misguided men. © Ohr Somayach International - all rights reserved

From: **Michal Horowitz** <contact@michalhorowitz.com>

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Parshas Shelach: Tourists or Spies?

In this week's sedra (in Chutz la'Aretz), Shelach, we learn of the infamous sin of Cheit Ha'Meraglim. On the cusp of entry to the land of Israel, just over a year after leaving Egypt, Moshe sent twelve scouts, one man from each tribe, to investigate the Land of Israel. The pasukim tell us: And Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: **שְׁלַח-לְךָ אֲנָשִׁים, וְיִתְרוּ אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי נֹתֵן, לְךָ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ** – send for yourself men, and they shall scout the Land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel, send one man each for his father's tribe; each one shall be a prince in their midst (Bamidbar 13:1-2)... **אֵלֶּה שְׁמֹת הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-שְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה**... לְתוֹר אֶת-הָאָרֶץ – these are the names of the men that Moshe sent to scout out the land (v.16), **וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה לְתוֹר אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן**, and Moshe sent them to scout out the land (v.17).

He gave them specific instructions as to what they should look for: And see the land, what is it? Are the people strong or weak? Are they few or many? And what is the quality of the land? And what about the cities within her? And you shall take of the fruit of the land... **וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיִּתְרוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ**, and they went up and they scouted out the land (v.18-21).

Four times in this passage, we are told that the men were sent la'tur es ha'Aretz – to tour and scout out the Land! Four times in a Torah that does not waste even one word! It is, therefore, compelling and interesting to note that the Torah tells us they were sent to scout out the land, la'tur es ha'Aretz, while when referring to the sin, we call it the Chait Ha'Meraglim, the (Infamous) Sin of the Spies.

What is the meaning of 'to scout out the land' vs. 'to spy out the land'? Why does the Torah call them 'tourists' and we call them 'spies'? What do we learn from this difference and what practical mussar ha'skel, lesson, can we take for ourselves?

In his sefer, Eretz Yisrael in the Parashah, R' Moshe D. Lichtman writes, "Rabbi Shmuel David Lutzato (known as the Shadal, 1800-1865) notes that there is a difference between tur (a tourist) and meragel (a spy). A person who tours a certain place, or new land, seeks out the good that can be found in that place. As the pasuk says (in last week's sedra, Behaaloscha): **וַאֲרֹן** – and the Ark of Hashem's covenant traveled before them a distance of three days, to scout and search out a resting place for them (10:33).

"The opposite is true of a spy and his mission and purpose. A spy looks for the bad in a place, as Yosef said to his brothers (when he accused them of coming to Egypt with sinister intentions): **מִרְגָּלִים אַתֶּם, לְרֹאשׁוֹת אֶת-עֵרְוַת הָאָרֶץ** – You are spies! To see the nakedness (weak points) of the land you

have come! (Bereishis 42:9)... Similarly, **אֶל-אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ, הִשְׁלַחְתָּ אֶת-עַבְדְּךָ, שְׂמֹעַל בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ** – He slandered your servant to my lord the king (Shmuel II 19:28)... They all mean a revealing of someone or something's disgrace and evil. [See also Vayikra 19:16, **לֹא-תִלְוֶה רֵכִיל בְּעַמִּיךָ**, with Rashi, for another powerful illustration of this idea.]

"Now, Moshe Rabbeinu did not send the twelve men out of necessity, as is well known. After all, G-d said that it was a land flowing with milk and honey. In addition, what difference does it make if the nation dwelling there is strong or weak, seeing that Hashem will fight on behalf of Am Yisrael? Rather, Moshe sent them la'tur es ha'Aretz, to tour the Land, to see its goodness and tell the people of its glory, in order to encourage them to follow after Hashem. They, however, acted corruptly, plotting an abominable scheme and overturning Moshe's intentions.

"Therefore, we refer to them as meraglim, spies, even though the Torah – at the outset of their mission – refers to them as tarim, tourists. Indeed, in the book of Devarim (1:24) [which is always read erev Tisha b'Av, the day the spies returned and the nation sat to cry] the Torah there – 39 years after the sin of the spies occurred – uses a lashon that accurately reflects their intentions and disaster they wrought: **וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-נֶחַל אֲשֵׁרֵל; וַיִּרְגְּלוּ, וַיָּבֹאוּ** – and they turned and they went up the mountain, and they came to Nachal Eshkol, and they spied it out.

"They acted like spies, not tourists or scouts, even though they were sent to tour and not spy" (Eretz Yisrael in the Parashah, p.258).

From here we learn an important lesson. Whether we are blessed to live in Eretz Yisrael, or are zocheh to visit her holy soil from time to time (with the hopes and dreams of one day settling there), we must always approach the Land with eyes of tayarim, tourists, looking to see the excitement, beauty, holiness, goodness and blessings that can only be found in the Land. The set of glasses we choose to wear when viewing Eretz Yisrael – those of tayarim or those of meraglim, c'v – will shape our mission and our experience with the Land.

On the occasion of his 10th "Aliyaversary", David Olivestone recently wrote: "One erev yomtov, as I paid for my challot and rugelach at the bakery counter, the assistant – a man without a kippah – wished me chag samayach. He said he looked forward to seeing me during chol ha'moed. 'No,' I said, 'I have all I need for the whole chag as we won't be having any guests.' 'Perhaps,' he answered, 'Eliyahu ha'Navi will come?'" (Jewish Action, Summer 2023, p.112).

As Eretz Yisrael is the Land that Hashem seeks out – **אֶרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר-הָאֱלֹהִים דֹּרֵשׁ** – (Devarim 11:12) – we would be wise to remember that the Land that Hashem loves is His gift to the nation that He loves. If His eyes are upon it from the beginning to the end of the year, to seek its good and beauty, we must make sure we share His vision, longing and love for the Land.

Perhaps then, the sin of the spies will be rectified and repaired, and as the assistant in the bakery said: Maybe, just maybe, Eliyahu ha'Navi will come. **בְּבִרְכַת בְּשׂוֹרֹת טוֹבוֹת וּשְׂבַת שְׁלוֹם**,

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Not Off Script Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

June 7, 2023

I cannot say that it was exactly congruous, but during the indescribable Adirei HaTorah event, a thought passed through my mind.

I was sitting together with 25,000 others – some talmidim, some alumni, some tomchim of Bais Medrash Govoah, some rabbonim, some simple Jews who knew that they had to be part of this massive outpouring of love and kavod for the Torah, and, in the words of the Paterson rosh yeshiva, those who are clothed in the Torah and become its corporeal existence through their learning.

We were inspired together by the words of roshei yeshiva and gedolei Yisroel who graced us with their presence. We sang together, we danced together, and we connected as one.

But when Rav Meir Tzvi Bergman spoke, something crossed my mind. Having learned in Ponovezh close to fifty years ago, I remember the rosh yeshiva and his children, as they were so often in the proximity of Maran Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach. When I sat shivah for my father zt"l, he came to our home to be menachem avel our family. His divrei Torah and chiddushim are so enlightening, and the mere sight of him at the event made an indelible roshem upon me.

When he spoke about the concept of yedidim, and how the bnei Torah and the tomchim personify the beloved moniker that the Torah bestowed upon their forebears, I felt uplifted.

And then, the rosh yeshiva suddenly shifted gears. It showed his endless commitment to Klal Yisroel as a whole, as the pain in his heart flooded the entire room and pierced the hearts of the more than 25,000 gathered to raise the keren haTorah.

And when he started speaking what seemed totally off topic, my mind switched gears as well. I thought of a scene I had watched originally in a museum in New York many years ago. I'll describe it: It was the Yiddishe wedding of the century: The daughter of Rav Chaim Elazar Shapira, the illustrious Munkatcher Rebbe, was to marry the son of the Rebbe of Partzov. Both Chassidic dynasties were royal, aristocratic, and majestic. And the ceremony was to be equally regal. The chosson and kallah would ride in opulent carriages, drawn by four white horses. The wedding meal was so large that every needy member of the community would be allowed to partake. It was the Jewish event of the century!

I have to assume that in its day, the event, although celebrating a personal simcha, was something akin to the glory and majesty of the Adirei HaTorah event.

There was no Matzav.com or Yeshiva World back then, but there was so much excitement that an actual secular news crew came to film the wedding. The footage would be incorporated as part of the pre-feature newsreels shown at American movie theaters across the Atlantic. "Imagine!" thought the reporters. "This would attract hundreds of Jewish people who had roots in Europe into the theater!" The difficult part was to convince the Munkatcher Rebbe to speak for the cameras. The rebbe vehemently opposed the frivolities and wanton ideas of the cinema, and would not participate in a film. The producer assured the rebbe that only his voice, not his face, would be presented to the large audiences.

"Rebbe, this is a wonderful opportunity for you to talk about the Chassidic court of Munkatch! Imagine how many Jews would be fascinated by your life's work. It would also be a wonderful opportunity to send personal wishes to all your followers who have left Europe to come to America."

Finally, the rebbe consented. He would speak, but not be filmed. But the producer lied and we have the film of the rebbe speaking before the microphones and the camera that was obscured from his view. He was very brief. He did not sound buoyant, but the producers probably had no idea what he said. In fact, he seemed pained. Tearfully, he repeated his message a few times and then turned his head and stopped talking.

The American crew was excited. They were going to present the wedding with its entire mystique and majesty to American audiences. They would get the official tearful "Mazel tov, thank you for coming," that they believed the rebbe had said.

However, when the wedding film was shown in American theaters, the scene of the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony was a stark contrast to the interview with the rebbe. They did not see a jubilant rebbe toasting the large audience upon the joyous occasion. Instead, they saw the rebbe pleading tearfully on the silver screen, "Yidden, heet der Shabbos! Jewish brothers, keep the Shabbos!" Those were the only words he said. Then he turned his face and wept. Those were the only words that the rebbe chose to speak.

I know that Rav Meir Tzvi spoke more than just the ending words, but when he turned his attention, in front of thousands of yeshivaleit and bochurim, and spoke about the pain of those who are looking for their zivug, and for those girls who are not yet zocheh to be "natri l'guvrayhu d'asi m'bai rabbonon, to wait for their husbands who return home from the bais

medrash," I was in awe. The rosh yeshiva pained himself to repeat in English the segulah that was transmitted from Rav Shach, to bentch every word from a siddur or bentcher and not say the words by heart.

I heard the pain cry out, the same way the Munkatcher Rebbe cried about Shabbos. He may not have screamed it aloud, but it reverberated just as powerfully to every person in the room and the tens of thousands watching on video.

Gedolei Yisroel throughout the generations go off script for Klal Yisroel. Rav Aharon Kotler would cry for Chinuch Atzmai during Lakewood Yeshiva events. Rav Pam would cry for Shuvu even at gatherings that were not apropos for the occasion. Rav Elya Svei would cry for the Russian talmidim and Sinai Academy even at Philadelphia Yeshiva parlor meetings. There is no script. There is no one occasion. There is Klal Yisroel, Kudsha Brich Hu, and the Torah. It is all one. And every element of them, from Klal Yisroel's growth, physically, spiritually or familially, is all the same. It is the script of gedolei Yisroel. There is nothing beneath them and there is no language barrier. It is all kavod haTorah. It is all Adirei HaTorah.