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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Jun 27, 2024, 12:20 PM subject: Rav Yissocher Frand - Two Types of Laziness Parshas Shlach - Two Types of Laziness

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly portion: #1297 – Oh Oh Some-one Took My Tallis by Accident and Left His; Can I Use His Tallis? Good Shabbos! There is a Medrash in Parshas Shelach that quotes a pasuk in Mishlei in connection with the meraglim. The pasuk in Mishlei says, "Like what vinegar does to a person's teeth and like smoke getting into a person's eyes, this is what a lazy messenger does to the person who sent him." (10:26) The Gaon, in his commentary to Mishlei, explains that when a person wishes to stimulate his appetite, he usually drinks something. However, if by mistake he drinks vinegar, not only

will that not stimulate his desire to eat something, but on the contrary, it ruins his appetite (because it ruins his teeth). Similarly, if a person wants light to read by, or if he needs a source of illumination for any reason, but he lights wood that is still moist, it will cause a lot of smoke and make it even more difficult for him to read or see anything. The Gaon explains that a lazy messenger is similar, vis-a-vis his sender: Contrary to his expectation and hope, the lazy messenger not only does not accomplish his mission, but also causes disappointment and aggravation that is even worse than if he had never been sent in the first place. The Medrash is pointing out that the meraglim were lazy, and this caused great aggravation and disappointment to Moshe Rabbeinu, who sent them on their mission.

The meforshim provide a lengthy indictment of what the meraglim did wrong. They had ulterior motives, they were seekers of honor, they were haughty, etc., etc. The list of what they did wrong goes on and on. However, laziness does not seem to be among the list of accusations. So why then does the Medrash accuse them of laziness? How was their laziness manifest? On the contrary, the Rashbam says that the meraglim volunteered for this mission. A spy mission is a dangerous venture. It involves heading into enemy territory. If a spy is caught, he will likely be killed. Lazy people do not volunteer for life-threatening jobs.

Rav Chaim Dov Keller addresses this question with a vort from Rav Shneur Kotler. His insight is based on another pasuk in Mishlei and on another Gaon. The pasuk in Mishlei (6:9) reads, "How long will you be lazy, one who sleeps? When will you arise from your sleep?" This pasuk seems to contain a redundancy of expression. However, the Gaon says that there is no redundancy here. Just as there is laziness in action, there is also laziness in thought. The first part of the pasuk is speaking about physical laziness (not getting out of bed). The second part of the pasuk is referring to laziness of thought. The laziness that we usually think about is when someone is too lazy to get up and do something. However, there is a much more subtle form of laziness: Laziness of thought, for example, failing to expend the effort to think things through. Laziness of thought is characterized by jumping to conclusions and being satisfied with the most facile or superficial explanation of the facts.

This is what the Medrash means that the meraglim were lazy. They were not lazy in their actions. They volunteered for this mission. They traveled throughout the country for forty days. These were not lazy people. But their laziness manifested itself in how they viewed and how they perceived Eretz Yisrael. One of the complaints of the meraglim was that Eretz Yisrael was "a land that consumes those who dwell there." How did they come to that conclusion? When they arrived, the whole country was involved with funerals. Their immediate conclusion was "People are dropping dead here like flies."

Granted, that was one way of explaining what they witnessed. But there was another way to view this phenomenon. From my house, I happen to have a view of the corner of Mt. Wilson Lane and Reisterstown Road, on which stands a funeral home – Sol Levinson and Brothers. I have a good idea what happens at funeral homes. Some days, there are no funerals, some days there are two or three funerals, and some days there are four or five funerals. Even though Baltimore is a large city, and this is a major funeral parlor, it is very rare, if ever, that I see seven or eight funerals on the same day. And here we have an entire country involved in funerals. What does that mean? If the meraglim would have taken the time to think about the matter, they would not have immediately concluded “this is a land that consumes its inhabitants.” Maybe it was a sign of Divine providence that the Ribono shel Olam wanted the inhabitants to be preoccupied with burials and mourning so that they would not notice the meraglim passing through their land. However, coming to that conclusion required thought and brainpower. Anything that requires depth of perception will not be considered by someone who manifests laziness in thought.

The mistakes that the meraglim made were all along these lines. It is possible to come to more than one conclusion. Their conclusions were caused by laziness, not traditional laziness, but rather laziness of thought. This is what the Medrash means that the meraglim were lazy and caused aggravation to their sender.

Sins That Come Without Any Pangs of Guilt or Regret
Virtually all the meforshim comment on the name change Moshe Rabbeinu implemented for his talmid Hoshea prior to sending him out on the mission to spy out the land. The pasuk says, “And Moshe called Hoshea bin Nun, Yehoshua” (Bamidbar 13:16). Rashi says, “He prayed for him: May Hashem save you from the plan of the meraglim.” The question is, if Moshe suspected that the meraglim were planning a conspiracy that might corrupt his faithful disciple, why did he not cancel the mission? Alternatively, why didn’t Moshe daven (pray) for the other meraglim? Furthermore, the Targum Yonosan ben Uziel interprets this pasuk as saying: “When Moshe saw the humility of Hoshea, he changed his name to Yehoshua.” The question is: What does Hoshea’s humility have to do with the fear of his being ensnared in the scheme of the meraglim?

Rabbeinu Yaakov Yosef (the one and only Chief Rabbi of the City of New York) gives a beautiful interpretation. There are two types of aveiros, “standard aveiros” and “subtle aveiros”. A standard aveira is when a person knows something is wrong, but he does it anyway. “I know I am not supposed to do this, but my Yetzer HaRah is too strong and I am going to do it regardless!” However, a subtle aveira is a much more difficult aveira to overcome. That is when you think what you are doing is a mitzvah. There are no regrets or pangs of guilt associated with such an action. It is very difficult for me to believe that I

shouldn’t be doing such an action: “What are you talking about? I’m doing a mitzvah!”

According to the Zohar, the rest of the meraglim did not want to go into Eretz Yisrael because they were aware that if and when Klal Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael, there would be a new regime of leadership. The leadership of the wilderness (of whom they were all a part) would be retired or replaced. The Zohar says that they wished to retain their positions of power and prestige. Therefore, they tried to sabotage the national entry into Eretz Yisrael.

Yehoshua’s challenge was entirely different. Yehoshua was not, chas v’shalom, worried about his position. This is the first category of aveira – “a grobba aveira”. They knew it was wrong to put their personal honor above the welfare of the entire nation, but they went ahead with the plan anyhow. As Chazal say, if there was any reason for Yehoshua to have hesitated about going into Eretz Yisrael, it was because “Eldad and Meidad prophesized in the camp.” (Bamidbar 11:27) Rashi explains that their prophecy, which so concerned Yehoshua, was that “Moshe will die and Yehoshua will take the nation into the Land.”

Yehoshua, the talmid protégé of Moshe Rabbeinu did not want his master to die. “What is Klal Yisrael going to do without a Moshe Rabbeinu?” So if Yehoshua would have any “negiyus” (ulterior motive) not to go into Eretz Yisrael, it would be the furthest thing from a personal agenda. He had no interest in preserving his own honor. His motivation would have been totally for the Sake of Heaven, a talmid being devoted to his Rebbe. So, if Yehoshua would have tried to sabotage the mission, it would definitely have been an aveira, but it would have been an aveira of the second category – that he perceives as a mitzvah!

So, says Rav Yaakov Yosef, everything is understood: Moshe Rabbeinu assumed that somewhere along the line the meraglim would say to one another “Hey! Wait a minute! We should sabotage the plan of the Ribono shel Olam because of our own honor? We can’t do such a thing! How low can someone be?” In other words, guilt would eventually get to them. Moshe, therefore, felt that he did not need to daven for the other eleven spies. They would come around and decide not to sabotage the mission on their own. However, when Moshe saw the great humility of Yehoshua, and that Yehoshua did not want to be the leader, Moshe recognized that this was a much more difficult aveira to overcome because it was disguised in the form of a mitzvah. Therefore, Moshe felt that Yehoshua needed s’yata d’shmaya more than any of the others, so Moshe davened specifically that Yehoshua be saved from the scheme of the meraglim.

Values Trickle Down – For Better and For Worse

With so many things to talk about in Parshas Shelach, there is an incident in the parsha that is often overlooked: The day after the Divine decree that this generation would not enter Eretz Yisrael and that they would die out in the wilderness, there

was a group that decided on their own to make an abortive attempt to enter the land in an ostensible show of remorse and repentance for having accepted the negative report of the meraglim. Moshe immediately chastised them and warned them that their efforts would not be successful. This group of rebels did not listen to Moshe Rabbeinu.

The pasuk says, “va’ya’apilu” (They defiantly ascended...to the mountaintop...) (Bamidbar 14:44). On this basis, this group was known as the m’apilim. The Torah says that Amalek and the Canaanim who dwelt on the mountain descended and beat them back to Charmah. (Bamidbar 14:45). The m’apilim were wiped out for refusing to accept the Divine decree.

The Baal HaTurim notes that the Gematria value of va’ya’apilu is Tzelafchad, implying that Tzelafchad was one of the m’apilim (as mentioned in Maseches Shabbos 96b). It is interesting that despite being wrong, Tzelafchad had his heart in the right place. Of course, when Hashem says “Don’t go,” you don’t go. When Moshe Rabbeinu says “Don’t go,” you don’t go. However, Tzelafchad had his heart in the right place in that he loved Eretz Yisrael. He wanted to go into Eretz Yisrael. In this particular instance, his chibas ha’aretz caused him to make a misguided, bad decision, but it was still chibas ha’aretz.

Later on, at the end of Sefer Bamidbar, who came to Moshe Rabbeinu manifesting a love for Eretz Yisrael? It is none other than Tzelafchad’s daughters! They protest “Our father died in the desert! What is going to be with us? We want a portion in Eretz Yisrael!” Where did they get that love of the land? Obviously, it came from their father. Tzelafchad had a chibas ha’aretz. He must have talked about Eretz Yisrael with his family. His daughters were raised hearing about the beauty and richness of the land and were instilled with a love of Eretz Yisrael.

The lesson is that our values trickle down to our children. Children pick these things up. If we have ahavas haTorah, they see that. If we have ahavas Eretz Yisrael, they see that. If we have a sense of kavod for rabbonim and Torah scholars, they see that. But if we have a love of money and things like that, they see that as well. If we perpetually have an attitude of cynicism, they see that too. It all trickles down. So, although Tzelafchad did something which was obviously wrong, his love of the land trickled down to his children to the extent that they later said, “We want our portion in the Land of Israel!”

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A "Different Spirit"

Rabbi Moshe Taragin

Twelve leaders were dispatched on an excursion to collect intel about the land of Israel. Tragically, they turned- against Hashem and against Jewish history. They returned with terrifying reports about cities fortified to the sky and about a fearsome land roaming with giants who dwarfed human beings into the size of insects. Their devious slander and cowardly lack of faith derailed Jewish history. What was shocking was the complete lack of any debate or internal discussion. Hadn't Hashem just liberated them from Egyptian slavery, split the raging oceans and parted the heavens at Sinai? Shouldn't He be trusted to assure the successful settlement of the land which He Himself had promised. Panicked and delirious with fear, they betrayed ancient divine promises. Only two of these men displayed any courage. Yehoshua, Moshe's closest talmid and his future successor, could be counted upon to remain loyal to his mentor. Alongside Yehoshua, Calev, a relatively unknown, also defied this insidious conspiracy, almost succeeding in restoring public faith. Where did he get his courage and his strength from? Part of the answer is that he drew his conviction from his "defiant" wife, herself trained to resist public opinion. According to one report in the Gemara, Calev married Batya, the Egyptian princess who had rescued Moshe from a watery death. Her heroic rebellion against the system was a bold defiance of her own father's decree. Batya rebelled against the Egyptian culture of blood and death, saved a Jewish infant, and triggered our liberation from Egypt. Years later, her husband Calev demonstrated similar fortitude by refusing to sheepishly fall in line with the conspirators. Two rebels, married in resistance, defied public opinion and almost rescued Jewish history. Calev was rewarded by being one of the few of his generation to enter Israel. The Torah announces that he had "a different spirit" about him. His non-conformist spirit emboldened him to resist the mob and to deliver truths.

Whether people were willing to accept truths is another matter. Regardless, he stood up to lies and to distortion. He had a different spirit.

Group thinking One of the great ironies of the internet revolution is that it encourages herd mentality. Ideally, the internet should be a democratizing force, decentralizing the information flow, and empowering people to consume only the information they choose. However as with all human liberties, unconditional freedoms turn into oppressive cultural tyrannies. Instead of fostering greater personal autonomy social media has exacerbated group thinking. Social media incarcerates us in echo chambers which limit what we see and what we are exposed to. Additionally, it creates viral content compelling us to join popular trends without full evaluation of the facts. Moreover, social media empowers influencers with disproportionate sway regarding issues they are completely uneducated about. Finally, social media allows false ideas to quickly spread, creating the bogus impression of truth. All these factors incite a herd mentality. We have witnessed the toxic effects of herd mentality weaponized in the attack against our people and against the truth. Herd mentality has become a mob mentality. The victims of violence have been miscast as criminals. Calls for ceasefire have degenerated into chants for the murder of Jews. It is frustrating that so many get it so wrong. It is frustrating that so many are so blinded by hate, that they have absolutely no interest in even the basic facts. It is frustrating to see the world go insane with anger and hatred. It is not only frustrating, but also frightening. Frightening to watch mobs of Arabs hunt innocent people in Jewish neighborhoods around the world. Frightening to see Jewish stores and synagogues looted and frightening to face the venomous hatred of an enraged world.

To stand alone

Yet, we are the people of a different spirit, and we have faced this hatred before. It has been our legacy to stand tall and block out the noise and the hatred. We have always possessed this courage and this "different spirit" and our current crisis should be no different. The gemara records that, upon entering Israel, Calev detoured to Chevron to visit the Me'arat Hamachpeilah and to daven for the strength to defy the spies. Standing at the graves of our Avot and Imahot he surely identified with their ability to stand alone and resist their own culture. These founders of our nation weren't yet referred to as Jews or even as Israelites, but as Ivrim, or those from the "other side". They had the courage to stand on one side while the entire world stood on the other side. To be a Jew is to be comfortable standing alone. For centuries, we preached monotheism to a world drunk with pagan gods. We stood alone. For centuries we spoke of a civil society which preserved the dignity of Man, while the world was subjugated by brutal tyrants and miserable societies. We stood alone. For the past thousand years we faced malicious hostility and brutal violence while we were consistently demonized as the "other". We stood

alone. During the nightmare of the Holocaust, Hitler tried to erase us from this planet, while much of the world stood by silently. We stood alone. During the first few decades of the State of Israel, hostile Arab countries partnered with the powerful Soviet Union in an attempt to crush our small country. We stood alone. We have always been the people of a "different spirit", unafraid to stand alone. Now is no different. As the people of a "different spirit" we cannot be intimidated by the violence and the rage we face. This is our responsibility to past generations who stood tall and stood alone. We owe it to them. They would gladly trade places with us if they could. They didn't have a State or an army to protect them. They didn't live in the company of a Jewish people returning to their homeland to jointly build a common future. They stood alone and lonely. We stand alone and united. We owe it to them to summon our courage and to preserve our "different spirit" As the people of a different spirit, we have a debt to Jewish history. We owe it to past generations to maintain our own inner moral conviction and to not allow crazed mobs of confused college students to muddle our clarity. Just because hordes of antisemites or crowds of bewildered college puppets vilify us as the aggressors doesn't alter the fact that, since our return to Israel, we have been ceaselessly attacked, and additionally, that we were the primary victims of October 7th. We consistently seek peace while our enemies always seek death. We owe it to past generations to continue this war to its necessary conclusion, which we alone must determine. We cannot allow international pressure to prevent us from ending this war a moment sooner than it should or from defending our country and providing a safer world for our children. We owe it to past generations not to be afraid. The Torah prohibits fear for soldiers engaged in war. Of course, the Torah cannot legislate against the emotion of fear. Rather, it demands that we manage fear just as we manage our other emotions. There is a thin line between fear and panic and the Torah warns us against crossing it. We have a different spirit. We have outlasted all our enemies, and we will outlast hatred and antisemitism. Don't be afraid to stand alone. It is part of Jewish identity. Emunah. Courage. Spirit.

The writer is a rabbi at Yeshivat Har Etzion/Gush, a hesder yeshiva, with ordination from Yeshiva University and a master's in English literature from CUNY. He is the author of *Dark Clouds Above, Faith Below* (Kodesh Press), which provides religious responses to Oct. 7.

From: Iraz@kalgovoah.org

Tidbits in Memory of Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz

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) reveals to us that, in fact, the Meraglims' negative intentions were present from the time they entered the land. Therefore, the sin of lashon hara in the form of negative thoughts was 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 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, Rebbetzin Bruria 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 one's mind and heart in order to cultivate positive words and deeds.

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Shelach 5784: Lessons in Respect

Mrs. Michal Horowitz : June 25 2024

This week's parsha, Parshas Shelach, tells us of Cheit Ha'Meraglim, the Sin of the Spies. Prior to their planned, and (what they thought was) imminent entry to the Land, Moshe sent twelve spies to scout out the Land - one per tribe. Ultimately, after forty days and nights of scouting out the Land, the spies returned with a negative report about the Land, and convinced the nation, en masse, that entering and conquering the Land would be impossible. The entire nation cried on that night (Bamidbar 14:1), and the Sages teach that that night was Tisha b'Av (Taanis 29a).

ובתתב: "ונתשא כל העדה ויתגנו את קולם ויכפו העם בליקלה ההוא", אמר רבא אמר רבי יוחנן: אותו לילה ליל תשעה באב היתה. אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא: And the entire assembly lifted up their voice, and the nation cried on that night" (Bamidbar 14:1). That night was 9 Av, and HKB"H said to them: You cried a purposeless cry; I will establish for you a crying for generations (Taanis 29a).

This disastrous sin, and rejection of the Land, as well as a lack of faith in the One Who Promised to give them the Land, caused a ripple effect of galus (exile) and churban (destruction) through the generations.

Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski z"l writes, "The episode of the spies is one of the most enigmatic occurrences in the Torah. The twelve men chosen were tribal leaders, and Rashi states

that they were righteous people (Rashi to Bamidbar 13:3). What happened to them that caused them to lose faith in G-d and discourage the nation from entering the Promised Land? Furthermore, the Abarbanel says that Moshe's involvement in sending the spies was the real reason he was not permitted to enter the Land" (Twerski on Chumash, p.306). How can we understand this entire enigma of this sin? Why did Moshe agree to send the spies, once G-d had promised him - and the nation - that it was a good Land. In fact, at the Burning Bush, before Hashem tells Moshe about Matan Torah, He tells him about Eretz Yisrael! "And I am coming down to save them from the hand of the Egyptians, וילקחתי מן-המצרים וילקחתי את ישראל אל-ארץ טובה ורחבה, אל-ארץ זבת חלב ודבש - and to take the nation out of this land, to the Land that is good and broad, to the Land flowing with milk and honey" (Shemos 3:8). What happened, and how did this happen?

Rabbi Dr. Twerski explains that, "Thirty-eight years later Moshe reminds the nation of this tragic sin. He says: "All of you approached me and said, 'Let us send some men ahead of us and let them spy out the Land' (Devarim 1:22). Rashi comments that the phrase 'all of you (approached me)' indicates that they came as a mob, the young pushing the elders out of the way. This was complete disrespect. Yet, nonetheless, Moshe says, 'This idea appealed to me' (ibid, 1:23)" (Twerski on Chumash, p.306).

How could Moshe have seen the people pushing each other out of the way - ותקרבון אלי כלהם בערבוביה - ילדים דוחפין את הזקנים, - you all approached me in a great multitude/crush of people - the youth were pushing the elderly and the elderly were pushing the tribal leaders (Rashi to Devarim 1:22) - and nevertheless agreed to their plan? In the very next verse, he himself says: ויטב בעיני הדבר, and the matter was good in my eyes, so I chose twelve men from amongst you, one man per tribe (ibid, v.23).

Rabbi Dr. Twerski proposes that, "Moshe's error was that he mistook their pushing and shoving as enthusiasm for entering the Land, and this caused him to err - and overlook their lack of respect for the elders and leaders. This misinterpretation was Moshe's complicity in the Sin of the Spies.

"Respect is primary in Judaism...lack of respect is a mortal sin. The spies were indeed righteous people at the beginning of the journey, but they were sent as agents of the people. And in halacha, an agent is a representative of the principal. While in mussar, an agent can be affected by the character of the principal. Having become agents of the people - people who were disrespectful towards Moshe, each other, and ultimately G-d - the scouts/agents were corrupted and their perspective was distorted.

"The fatal report of the spies resulted, not only in the death of that entire generation, but in a disastrous way on our entire history... We can rectify their mistake by being scrupulous in respect, not only of our elders, but of every person, young and old" (Twerski on Chumash, p.306-307).

In a generation, time and world that is sorely lacking in respect - one only has to take a cursory look at the news for countless real-life examples of the disastrous effects of lack of respect, one man for another - our nation must be elevated and live higher. We must strive to always show respect to others, through our thoughts, speech and actions.

A certain man recalled the following interaction he had with Rav Moshe (Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l, 1895-1986). "One evening, I answered the doorbell and there stood Rav Moshe and his assistant, Rabbi Moshe Rivlin. We shook hands and I then escorted them upstairs to my dining room. My wife brought in glasses of tea and we began to talk. Rav Moshe came to ask that I support his yeshiva, and our discussion went on for some time.

"Finally, Rav Moshe rose to leave. It was then that my two young sons came to ask to take a picture with the Rosh Yeshiva. I was embarrassed but Rav Moshe said, 'No, no, there is nothing wrong at all. I would be happy to pose with them.' He put an arm around each boy and I took the picture. He wished me well, and then he left.

"A few minutes later the doorbell rang again. I opened it and was shocked to see Rav Moshe and Rabbi Rivlin standing at my door. Rav Moshe explained that they had forgotten to thank my wife for the tea. So he and Rabbi Rivlin had climbed the stairs once again (Rav Moshe was 74 at the time), thanked my wife, and then they left" (Reb Moshe, 25th Yahrzeit Edition, Artscroll Mesorah, p.214).

We live in a world where respect is virtually non-existent. Klal Yisrael must rise higher, and remember we are a nation of 'with our youth and our elders we shall go' (Shemos 10:9). Perhaps when we respect each other - in our families, neighborhoods, communities, and in our nation - we will be able to be mesaken (rectify) the sin of the spies, and effect redemption.

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Parashat Shelach

Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider : June 24 2024

Taking the Land's Hand in Marriage

If asked what sin the spies were guilty of, most people would answer that it is leshon ha-ra, sinful speech, about the promised land. The Midrash makes their sin more egregious by saying that the spies failed to learn the evident lesson from the very last episode of the previous parashah. Right before the shameful episode that begins Parashat Shelach, Miriam spoke leshon ha-ra about her brother and was punished in such a way that the entire million-strong nation had to take notice. The willful ignorance of the spies was unforgivable.¹

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik noticed a more substantive connection between the events. Miriam had failed to realize that her brother Moshe, the greatest prophet to have ever lived,

was categorically different from all others. His segulah or special quality put him in a category of his own.² Similarly, the spies failed to perceive the segulah of the Holy Land, its unique character that makes it different from all other lands on the face of the earth.³

Land Alive

The Land of Israel is not a mass of dirt and stone. In at least three places in the Book of Leviticus, the Rav discerned the special character of the Land, particularly in how it is responsive to the needs and activities of the Jewish people living on it.

(1) The Torah enjoins us to observe a sabbatical year, shemittah, every seven years, and a jubilee every fifty. It then preempts the question of how the Jewish people will have food if they are not working the land, by saying that it will provide an abundance in the other years. It is a land attuned to the needs of the segulah people who inhabit it. "Eretz Yisrael has a vibrant, vital personality that distinguishes it from all other lands."⁴

(2) Shemittah is not described as a year of rest for the farmer, but a Sabbath for the land itself. Man rests on Shabbat, the Land of Israel rests on shemittah. Unlike other lands, Eretz Yisrael has a special character.⁵

(3) Transgressions made in the Land contaminate it, leading to an almost allergic reaction, by which its inhabitants are ejected, or, more viscerally, vomited out (Leviticus 18:28). The Land cannot tolerate sinful people, just as the body naturally rejects foreign tissue. The Holy Land is only at peace with holiness.⁶

Land as Bride

The Israelites already knew all of this by Parashat Shelach in the Book of Numbers, as it appears already in the Book of Leviticus. Not only would this land flow with milk and honey, but it would be a singular place, chosen by God as the only place for His Shechinah (divine presence), for a singular people, "a nation, one of its kind, which God has designed to preserve and disseminate His Divine teachings."⁷ The Maharal argued that entering this unique land was part of the very plan of the Exodus and the final phase of redemption. God promised: "I shall take you out... I shall rescue you... I shall redeem you... I shall take you to Me... I shall bring you to the land" (Exodus 6:6-8).⁸

The Rav compared the ontological union between the singular people with their singular land, where their shared destiny would unfold, to an eternal marriage. In this context, he cited a halachah which states that a man may not marry a wife sight unseen. No matter how many glowing recommendations pour in from trustworthy sources about the match, the prospective groom must make his wife's personal acquaintance. The connection must be formed in the depths of the heart and without reservations.⁹ Therefore, "before commitment could be deeply rooted and irrevocably assumed," the people had to "meet" the land through their tribal princes.¹⁰

Meeting the Soulmate

If one reads Moshe's checklist carefully, as the Rav did, one sees that Moshe primarily requested a demographic and agricultural report. Although the quantity and quality of produce is important for armies, who famously march on their stomachs, it is clear that information of military value was secondary to data on the nature of the land itself. Otherwise, why take pains to personally bring back clusters of grapes rather than sample and rate them in situ? The Rav noted further that the usual Hebrew root for spying (ל-ג-ר) is not employed here; instead we find a root that seems to indicate scouting or touring 11.(ה-ו-ג) This all makes sense in the framework of an arranged match. The people were promised a land of milk and honey by the ultimate Matchmaker, but Moshe wanted their representatives to become acquainted with the entire land firsthand.

The sin of those meant to become acquainted with the land was, in the Rav's words: "Their report was that of spies, not that of scouts; they balanced debits against credits and declared the entire enterprise hopeless. With grandeur looking down on them, all they could see was the mundane.1"

In the same way Miriam failed to see what made Moshe sui generis, the spies and the people could not see the segulah of the land. The land has a certain je ne sais quoi, a character and personhood that is beyond rational definition and logical categories. Its choice is an absolute expression of God's will. According to the Maharal, this grave error committed millennia ago of underestimating the vital relationship between the Land of Israel and our people, continues to have a detrimental effect on generations of Jews who, until this very day, fail to acknowledge the land's indispensability to living a committed life.13

Exploring the Rav's Insight

If one can put the Rav's insight in different terms, the scouts considered the land too cerebrally, and did not let their heart guide the initial meeting with the land of their destiny. The first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Mandate Palestine, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, once made a quip that expresses the same idea.

A Jew from the Diaspora was once visiting and touring the land, and he wanted to explore the possibility of living there permanently. He presented the pros and cons of living there to Rav Kook and made numerous calculations (וּבְנֵי חֵשְׁבֹן) to try and determine whether it was worthwhile for him to make the move. Rav Kook remarked: "Before the Israelites entered the land, they killed Sichon, king of Cheshbon 14". (וּבְנֵי חֵשְׁבֹן). In order to be find one's home in the land, one must eliminate calculations and take the plunge.15 Furthermore, it is our duty to expunge the spies' undervaluation of the land from our consciousness in every single generation, and to inculcate the centrality of the land to our national existence.16

The Rav suggested that we can learn from Moshe himself what it means to yearn for the Land. Moshe lived in the camp of the

Levites that was closest to the Mishkan, he entered it, and had regular, direct contact God. Still, he knew that an indispensable dimension of his spiritual life was missing outside the Land.17 There are communities throughout the world in which Jews live full Torah lives, but like Moshe they should have an insuppressible desire to live in the eretz segulah, the singular, Jewish Land.1

<https://www.tekhelet.com/pdf/conundrum.pdf>

TEKHELET - A CHEMICAL CONUDRUM

Emily J. Liebling

"...And they shall place upon the tzitzit of the corners [of the garment] a thread of tekhelet" (Bamidbar 15:38). "You shall make the mishkan of ten curtains twisted linen and tekhelet and argaman and tola'at shani..." (Shemot 26:1). "You shall make the robe of the ephod entirely of tekhelet" (Shemot 28:31).

These verses represent a mere sample of the myriad references made to the pigment of tekhelet in the Torah. Conventionally translated as the color turquoise, tekhelet has become nothing short of a mystery to its seekers. The chilazon is the source of tekhelet (Shabbat 26a), yet the identity of its species is fraught with uncertainty. As such, the Midrash states that the tekhelet has been concealed and today we possess only white tzitzit (Bamidbar Rabba 17:5) [1]. Because of this anonymity, the majority of observant Jews continue the tradition of not using tekhelet. In relatively recent times, however, there has been a concerted effort to re-determine the nature of tekhelet and the process of its production.

The color of tekhelet has long been associated with royalty and nobility, as can be seen from the verse, "clothed in tekhelet, governors and rulers..." (Yechezkel 23:6). The vestments of the Kohein Gadol were sewn of tekhelet-dyed wool and the palace of King Achashverosh was adorned with the piercing blue, as well (Esther 1:6). The Gemara, in Menachot 44a specifies that "the chilazon emerges from the water once every seventy years and with its blood tekhelet is dyed; therefore, tekhelet is expensive." Rashi comments that the rarity with which the chilazon appears on land is the reason for its astronomic cost. This could provide an understanding as to why the color was found mainly in the company of the wealthy. In fact, it was precisely the harvesting of the chilazon that gave the tribe of Zevulun its great wealth. When Moshe blessed Bnei Yisrael before his death, he declared to Zevulun, "...for by the riches of the sea they will be nourished and by the treasures concealed in the sand" (Devarim 33:19). The Talmud, in Megilla 6a, discloses that the "treasures" refer to "white glass" and the blood of the chilazon.

In various and disparate locations, the Gemara gives several criteria by which the chilazon is identified. Why, then, is this creature unbeknownst to us today? The answer lies in the fact that our tradition gives specific criteria for the chilazon, but

several species would have to be combined to meet those criteria. Some of the physical characteristics include:

- Its appearance on land once every 70 years (Menachot 44a).
 - Its anatomy is like that of a fish (Menachot 44a).
 - It is captured with nets that are lowered into the water (Shabbat 74b).
 - Its capture on Shabbat is prohibited by tzad (Shabbat 75a).
 - The method of dye extraction from the chilazon is described as “potzea”, the cracking of a hard surface (and not korea, which would imply the ripping of flesh) (Shabbat 75a).
- Descriptions of the tekhelet itself are given, as well:
- Its blood is collected in a separate sack, and does not diminish the life of the chilazon upon extraction (Tosfot, Ketuvot 5b).
 - The dye is of better quality when extracted from a live chilazon (Shabbat 75a).
 - The color of tekhelet from the chilazon is identical to that of kala ilan (indigo) (Bava Metziah 61b).
 - Tekhelet is permanent and does not fade with time nor wash out of the dyed wool (Menachot 43b).

Even though so many details are known about the chilazon and the tekhelet, the question still remains as to why the manufacture and wearing of tekhelet ever fell out of practice? There has been much speculation about the disappearance of tekhelet. No doubt ever existed in our tradition as to the identity of the chilazon or the process of tekhelet production. The falling from practice of dying with tekhelet was not a result of suddenly forgetting how to accomplish the task. It was due, rather, to the political decrees of Rome, as well as the enormity of its cost. During the supremacy of the Roman Empire, emperors, among them Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, proclaimed an official prohibition against the public production of tekhelet. They restricted the wearing of this royal color only to certain nobility, threatening capital punishment to those who disobeyed. Thus, the great danger associated with the use of tekhelet caused it to become lost as the generations passed. Additionally, the production of tekhelet was very expensive, even for the nobility who were permitted to use it. To appreciate the expense that tekhelet represented, in 301 BCE, one pound of tekhelet-dyed wool cost 50,000 dinarii, a salary of almost three years for a baker [2].

Throughout the ages, several proposals have been made as to the chilazon’s identity. Although modern day evidence is not supportive, Rambam, Rashi, and Tosfot agree that the chilazon is a fish. This creature satisfies the first three criteria, but how, then, can its dye be removed by potzea, which would imply that the chilazon has a hard shell to be cracked or smashed? Rashi resolves the issue and proposes that in this context, potzea means “squeezing out” the blood, or dye, from the chilazon. Some maintain that because tekhelet is used in the construction of the mishkan, it must be derived from a kosher source. Others disagree and counter that the dye is used to color materials which necessarily adhere to kashrut laws; the

dye, in and of itself, is not considered to be substantive and may, therefore, come from non-kosher animals [3].

A resurrection of the search for tekhelet came with the advent of a renewed Messianic enthusiasm of the nineteenth century. Religious leaders wrote and preached about the imminent redemption to the eager masses. Amid the excitement, were discussions regarding the rebuilding of the Temple and the recreation of the priestly garb. A standstill was then reached; how could the holy vestments be made without tekhelet? Rabbi Gershon Henoch Leiner, the Radziner Rebbe, assumed the responsibility of finding the lost ingredient and the animal from which it comes. He traveled to an aquarium in Naples to investigate a suggestion that the chilazon was the squid, *Sepia officinalis*, or as more commonly known, the cuttlefish. He consulted with the chemists of his town and found that its black ink secretions could be turned to blue. The Talmudic descriptions of the anatomy of the chilazon and its blue dye now paralleled his discovery. In three treatises, *Sefunei Temunai Chol*, *Petil Tekhelet*, and *Ein HaTekhelet*, R’ Leiner identified the chilazon as the cuttlefish.

In 1913, as part of his doctoral dissertation on tekhelet, Rabbi Isaac Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Dublin and subsequently Chief Rabbi of Israel, contacted eminent chemists and dye experts in Germany for an analysis of the tekhelet of the Radziner Rebbe. The shocking results showed that the deep blue was, in fact, an inorganic dye known as ferric ferrocyanide, $\text{Fe}_7(\text{CN})_{18}$, or Prussian blue. Upon request for the methods of tekhelet production used by the Radziner Chasidim, Rabbi Herzog noted that the ink was heated to very high temperatures and iron filings were then added to the hot liquid. Through this procedure, organic molecules in the ink decomposed. The carbon and nitrogen atoms recombined with the iron, producing the deep blue pigment. Thus, the Radziner’s tekhelet was not from the squid, but from an inorganic substance that could be produced from a generic chemical reaction. It represented the recombination of the atomic components of any number of molecules. Rabbi Herzog decided that the Radziner Rebbe’s formula could not be true tekhelet, as the Talmud goes to great lengths to specify the requirement of a specific biological species. He proffered, instead, that the chilazon could be the *Janthina* snail [4]. In the mid-1800’s, archaeologists unearthed several “factories” where dye was produced. Near these structures were large piles of snail shells, among them, the *Murex trunculus* [2]. Recent chemical evidence has led scientists to believe that the chilazon is, indeed, the *Murex trunculus* snail, which was used by the Phoenicians to dye their garments. The dye of the *Murex trunculus* undergoes a series of transformations, from colorless to yellow to green to blue, and finally, to purple [5]. Because tekhelet should be purely indigo, the presence of purple is very enigmatic.

In the 1980’s, Otto Elsner of the Shenkar College of Fibers investigated the ancient technique of exposing the dye to the

sun. He and Ehud Spanier of Haifa University researched this method even further and found that when the M. trunculus dye is in a chemically reduced state and subsequently exposed to any form of ultraviolet light, the purple hue completely disappears. Thus, the dye naturally reduces upon exposure to sunlight, which would explain the method of old [4].

The biochemistry of the in vivo dye production was later explained. The precursors of the dye are in the snail's hypobranchial gland as a clear, colorless liquid. Upon the liquid's exposure to air and sunlight, an enzyme known as purpurase converts it into the dye. The reaction produces a mixture of the blue indigo and the purple dibromoindigo. The sunlight causes the carbon-bromine bonds to break and the molecule is transformed into indigo, or tekhelet. Because of the rapid denaturation of purpurase, the gland must be squeezed immediately from the living mollusk, which is a criterion consistent with the Gemara's description that the animal remain viable after the extraction of the dye [4]. Rabbi Dr. Moshe D. Tendler, Shlita, writes that though no single individual can testify that he has received a tradition as to the identity of the chilazon and tekhelet, the knowledge that has surfaced from research and investigation is almost incontrovertible. Thus, "...the matter is equivalent to the testimony of two witnesses, whose word is sufficient to establish a matter" [2].

The complexity of the modern reestablishment of tekhelet is truly fascinating. It reflects the beautifully unwavering devotion of the Jew to HaShem and His commandments. The tireless efforts of those determined to find the chilazon and study the manufacture of its dye have hopefully contributed to the nearing of our final redemption. May we merit once again to see the tekhelet-colored constituents of the third and final Temple speedily in our days.

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from: Alan Fisher <afisherads@yahoo.com> to: Beth Sholom Landau Bill <latemaariv@bethsholom.org> date: Jun 27, 2024, 10:22 PM subject: Potomac Torah Study Center Devrei Torah for Shabbat Shelach 5784

BS"D The Internet Parsha Sheet, an outstanding compilation, will be available at parsha.net shortly after midnight. I recommend this compilation highly.

Alan

BS"D June 28, 2024

Potomac Torah Study Center Vol. 11 #38, June 28-20, 2024; 22-23 Sivan 5784; Shelach Lecha; Mevarchim HaHodesh Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.

Hamas continues to manipulate the media while pretending to negotiate with Israel. Hersh Polin Goldberg, cousin of very close friends of ours and a U.S. citizen, remains a captive. Concerns are increasing that fewer than half of the hostages may still be alive. We continue our prayers for the hostages and all our people stuck in Gaza. May Hashem enable us and our people in Israel to wipe out the evil of Hamas, protect us from violence by Hezbollah and other anti-Semites around the world, and restore peace for our people quickly and successfully.

With the blessing of Hashem, Moshe sends twelve leaders, one from each tribe, to tour Canaan for forty days and report back whether the land is good, the people are strong or weak, the cities are open or fortified, the land is fertile, and whether there are trees. The meraglim return, verify that it is indeed a land of milk and honey, and that the land produces terrific crops. However, they also report that the people are giants, that they view B'Nai Yisrael as grasshoppers, and that the land devours its people.

Rabbi Menachem Leibtag asks how the scouts sin, since they answer Moshe's questions. The sin of the majority report is that they assume that the Canaanites view B'Nai Yisrael as lowly insects and that the land devours its people. How do the ten Meraglim know what the Canaanite people believe? They do not investigate why so many people die during the forty day period. [Yehoshua's spies forty years later learn that the Canaanite people have heard of the power of Hashem and are terrified of B'Nai Yisrael. Chazal infer that there are so many deaths because God keeps the Canaanite people busy with funerals to protect the Israeli spies.]

Rabbi David Fohrman and the scholars at alephbeta.org note parallels in language and situation between the instructions and task of the Meraglim and two other earlier incidents in the Torah. When Yaakov sends Yosef to check on his brothers,

they throw him in a pit and plan to kill him. Yehuda convinces the other brothers instead to sell Yosef to traders who will sell him as a slave in Egypt. In a second incident, after the Exodus, and after B’Nai Yisrael cross the Sea of Reeds, Amalek attacks the weakest members of B’Nai Yisrael, those in the back who have trouble keeping up with the others. Moshe selects Yehoshua to lead the fight against Amalek. Yehoshua, Aharon, and Hur (Caleb’s son) stand and help Moshe hold up his arms to inspire B’Nai Yisrael in the battle. Yehoshua, from the tribe of Ephraim (Yosef), teams with Hur (tribe of Yehuda) to fight against Amalek and later joins Hur’s father Caleb among the Meraglim. Although Yehoshua has a family history reason not to trust Caleb or Hur, he works closely with these leaders from Yehuda to lead the fight against Amalek and oppose the evil report of the ten evil Meraglim. The partnership of Yehoshua with Caleb and Hur is a significant step in unifying the Leah and Rachel factions among B’Nai Yisrael.

Rabbi Marc Angel and Rabbi Michael Gordan both observe that leaders often err, and a majority can lead a group toward a misguided path. Rabbi Angel quotes playwright Diane Grant: “It’s better to walk alone, than with a crowd going in the wrong direction.”

In Sefer Shemot, when the people sin, Moshe quickly debates God until He forgives the people. When the people follow the majority report, cry about their coming doom, and seek to return to Egypt, both Moshe and Hashem are furious. God again threatens to kill all the people and start over with Moshe.

The only argument Moshe can make is that killing B’Nai Yisrael would be a public relations disaster for God – other nations would interpret this course as indicating that Hashem does not have enough power to bring the people into the land that He has promised. Hashem partially relents. He will delay their entry into the land for forty years, the generation of the Exodus (other than Caleb and Yehoshua) will die, and the next generation will enter the land.

Why are God and Moshe so much more angry in Sefer Bemidbar than in Shemot? The people of the generation of the Exodus see Hashem’s power, such as a year of plagues against Egypt and destruction of the Egyptian army and weapons. They also see His love for the people – manna six days a week, quail on some occasions, water from rocks, fighting against enemies, and keeping dangerous animals and pests away from the people. They should learn from the war against Amalek that God fights for B’Nai Yisrael, even when we do not see His impact directly. The reason for the plagues and wars is to teach B’Nai Yisrael that Hashem is with us, even when He hides His presence from our view. Yehoshua and Caleb understand this lesson. The other ten Meraglim and the people fail to learn this lesson, and they therefore do not deserve to enter the land.

Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander focuses on the mitzvah of tzitzit to bring this lesson to the current situation in Israel.

Since the horrors of October 7, there has been a religious revival in Israel, especially among the soldiers and many women in Israel. Many soldiers have started wearing tzitzit and davening daily with Tefillin. Soldiers are reciting Gomer after dangerous situations. Many women are baking challah and preparing Shabbat meals for soldiers. Military history scholars have frequently concluded that they can explain which side has won virtually every war in history. The exception is that they cannot explain the victories of Israel against the combined forces of many larger and often better equipped Arab countries. Iran recently sent a thousand missiles toward Israel on a Saturday night. Almost none of the missiles landed in Israel. There was no destruction of buildings. One person (a Druze girl) was injured, and she has recovered. Jordan and the United Kingdom joined the United States in helping to shoot down missiles. (How in the world did four countries combine to shoot down missiles without getting in the way of each other?) Egypt and many other countries, not all friendly to Israel, denounced Iran. The exercise exposed weaknesses in the Iranian military and weapons. The exercise was a public relations disaster for Iran. How can anyone explain these miracles without seeing the hand of Hashem fighting for Israel?

The most important lesson of Shelach is that we must see Hashem’s protection in our lives – every day as well as over time. The sin of the majority report of the Meraglim is not understanding Hashem’s lesson plan and role in protecting B’Nai Yisrael every day.

Shabbat Shalom,
Hannah and Alan

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during and since the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations. Please daven for a Refuah Shlemah for Hersh ben Perel Chana (Hersh Polin, hostage to terrorists in Gaza); Moshe Aaron ben Leah Beilah (badly wounded in battle in Gaza but slowly recovering), Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Reuven ben Basha Chaya Zlata Lana, Yoram Ben Shoshana, Leib Dovid ben Eitel, Avraham ben Gavriela, Mordechai ben Chaya, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Chai Frumel bat Leah, Rena bat Ilsa, Riva Golda bat Leah, Sarah Feige bat Chaya, Sharon bat Sarah, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, and all our fellow Jews in danger in and near Israel. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

Shabbat Shalom
Hannah & Alan

from: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabiyy-theyeshiva.net@shared1.ccsend.com> reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net date: Jun 27, 2024, 3:37 PM
Three Jewish Revolts—Then & Now, and the Response of a Jewish Leader

In Tribute to the 30th Yartzeit of the Rebbe

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

In August 1977, on the way to the Camp David Accords, Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn, NY

Five Mothers

Four Catholic mothers and a Jewish woman were having coffee.

The first Catholic woman tells her friends, "My son is a priest. When he walks into a room, everyone calls him Father."

The second Catholic mother chirps, "My son is a Bishop. When he walks into a room people call him Your Grace."

The third Catholic mom says, "My son is a Cardinal. When he enters a room, everyone says Your Eminence."

The fourth Catholic woman declares, "My son is the Pope. When he walks into a room people call him Your Holiness."

They all turn to the Jewish woman, and give her a subtle, "Well?"

She replies, "I have a son. He's argumentative, confrontational, self-centered, narcissistic, impulsive, impossible and irrational. When he enters a room, people say, Oh My G-d!"

Disaster

It was perhaps the single greatest collective failure of leadership in the Torah. Ten of the spies Moses had sent to survey the land returned with a report calculated to demoralize the nation.

"We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large ... We cannot go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are ... The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height... We seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." [1]

The spies Moses sent to survey the land convinced the entire nation that the advance to the Land of Israel was doomed and that Moses had misled them by taking them out of Egypt. Hysteria consumed the nation. They demanded a new leader who would return them to Egypt.

Moses, in response, chastised the nation severely. He told them G-d's oath that they would not enter the land but rather roam the wilderness for forty years. Only their children, anyone younger than 20 at the time, would enter the Promised Land.

Defiance and Mutiny

This part of the story is relatively well-known. What is often overlooked is that this story is followed in the Torah by three narratives of rebellion—two in Shlach and the third in Korach. The implication behind the chronology of these events seems

clear. All three scenes of mutiny were a response to the new and harsh reality of the nation destined to wander for four decades in the desert.

The first rebellion happens, the Torah says, immediately, the following morning after Moses gave them the news that they would not enter the Land. A group known as the "Maapilim," the defiant ones [2] (we don't know their exact number, but it seems like it was a sizable group) assembled and decided to advance toward the Holy Land. They exclaimed, "We are ready! We shall ascend to the place G-d has spoken; indeed, we have sinned."

This time, though, Moses refuses to go along. "Why do you transgress the word of G-d? It will not succeed! Do not ascend, for G-d is not in your midst! And you will be smitten before your enemies." [3]

But they disobeyed. They were determined to enter and conquer the Promised Land. "They defiantly ascended to the mountaintop, while the Ark of G-d's covenant and Moses did not move from the camp." It was an ill-advised move. They were struck down. [4]

The Wood Chopper

The second rebellion is recorded a few verses later.

"And the children of Israel were in the desert—an apparent reference to the fact that the Jews were to remain in the desert long-term—and they found a man chopping wood on the Sabbath." [5]

Let us recall that the day of rest has been held sacred by the Israelites even before they left Egypt. Later, it was enshrined as one of the Ten Commandments, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work and the seventh day is the day of Sabbath to your G-d, for G-d created the heavens and the earth in six days and on the seventh day He rested." [6] It was one of the commandments heard by the entire nation from G-d directly at Mt. Sinai, encapsulating the core Jewish belief that

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subject: Covenant and Conversation

COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l

What Made Joshua and Caleb Different?

SHELACH LECHA

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

The twelve men sent by Moses to explore the land of Israel came back with a wholly misleading report. They said:

"We cannot go up against those people, for they are stronger than us . . . The land which we have journeyed through and scouted is a land that consumes its inhabitants; and all the people we saw were tall and broad to a man."

Num. 13:31-32

In fact, as we later discover in the book of Joshua, the inhabitants of the land were terrified of the Israelites. When Joshua sent spies to Jericho, Rahab told them "A great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are

melting in fear because of you.” When the people heard what God had done for the Israelites, “our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you” (Josh. 2:9-11). The spies should have known this. They themselves had sung at the Red Sea:

“The people of Canaan melted away; terror and dread fell upon them.”

Ex. 15:15-16

The spies were guilty of an attribution error, assuming that others felt as they did. They said, “We were like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so we were in their eyes” (Num. 13:33). But as the Kotzker Rebbe noted, they were entitled to make the first claim. Just not the second. They knew how they themselves felt, but they had no idea how the people of the land felt. They were terrified of the Canaanites and failed to see that the Canaanites were terrified of them.

Now there are two obvious questions: First, why did ten spies make this mistake? Second, why did two of them, Joshua and Caleb, not make it?

Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck has written a fascinating book, *Mindset*[1], on why some people fulfil their potential, while others do not. Her interest, she says, was aroused when she observed the behaviour of 10-year-old children when given puzzles to solve. Some, when the puzzles became difficult, thrived. They relished the challenge, even when it proved too hard for them. Others became anxious. When the puzzles became hard, they were easily discouraged and quick to give up.

She wanted to understand why. What makes the difference between people who enjoy being tested and those who don’t? What makes some people grow through adversity while others become demoralised? Her research drove her to the conclusion that it is a matter of mindset. Some see their abilities as given and unalterable. We just are gifted or ordinary, and there is not much we can do about it. She calls this the “fixed mindset”. Others believe that we grow through our efforts. Where they do not succeed, they don’t define this as failure but as a learning experience. She calls this the “growth mindset”. Those with a fixed mindset tend to avoid difficult challenges because they fear failure. They think it will expose them as inadequate. So they are reluctant to take risks. They play it safe. When do people with the fixed mindset thrive? “When things are safely within their grasp. If things get too challenging . . . they lose interest.”

People with the growth mindset react differently. “They don’t just seek challenge, they thrive on it. The bigger the challenge, the more they stretch.”

Parents can do great damage, Dweck says, when they tell their children they are gifted, clever, talented. This encourages the child to believe that he or she has a fixed quantum of ability. This in turn discourages them from risking failure. Such children often grow up to say things like, “I feel that my

parents won’t value me if I’m not as successful as they would like.”

Parents who want to help their children should, she says, praise them not for their ability but for their effort, their willingness to try hard even if they fail. A great basketball coach used to say to his players, “You may be outscored, but you will never lose.” If they gave of their best, they might lose the game but they would gain and grow. They would be winners in the long run.

The person with a fixed mindset lives with the constant fear of failure. Those with a growth mindset don’t think in terms of failing at all.

Apply this logic to the spies and we see something fascinating. The Torah describes them in these words:

“All were all leading men among the Israelites.”

Num. 13:3

They were people with reputations to guard. Others had high expectations of them. They were princes, leaders, men of renown. If Dweck is right, people laden with expectations tend to be risk-averse. They do not want to be seen to fail. That may be why they came back and said, in effect: We cannot win against the Canaanites. Therefore, we should not even try. There were two exceptions, Caleb and Joshua. Caleb came from the tribe of Judah, and Judah, we learn in the book of Bereishit, was the first ba’al teshuvah. Early in life he had been the one who proposed selling Joseph into slavery. But he matured. He was taught a lesson by his daughter-in-law, Tamar. He confessed, “She is more righteous than I am.” That experience seems to have changed his life. Later, when the Viceroy of Egypt (Joseph, not yet recognised by the brothers) threatens to hold Benjamin as a prisoner, Judah offers to spend his life as a slave so that his brother can go free. Judah is the clearest example in Bereishit of someone who takes adversity as a learning experience rather than as failure. In Dweck’s terminology, he had a growth mindset. Evidently he handed on this trait to his descendants, Caleb among them.

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

Anyone who has experienced a name-change has been inducted into a growth mindset.

People with the growth mindset do not fear failure. They relish challenges. They know that if they fail, they will try again until they succeed. It cannot be coincidence that the two people among the spies who had the growth mindset were also the two who were unafraid of the risks and trials of conquering the land. Nor can it be accidental that the ten others, all of whom

carried the burden of people's expectations (as leaders, princes, men of high rank) were reluctant to do so.

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

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

from: Torah in Action /Shema Yisrael

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subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Peninim on the Torah

Parshas Shelach

Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

כי כל האנשים הראים את כבדי ... ולא שמעו בקולי ... אם יראו את הארץ ... וכל מנאצי לא יראוה

All the men who have seen My Glory... and they have not listened to My voice... They shall not see the land ... all those that spurn Me shall not see it. (14:22,23)

The terms, Ha'ro'im, "Who have seen (My Glory)," and Im yiru, "They shall not see," appear to be closely related. This, explains Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, is why the Torah, in issuing the decree that this generation would not enter the Land, uses the expression, re'iyah, seeing, rather than im ya'vo'u, they will not come. He explains the rationale for the altered text. The Holy Land, the Eretz zovas cholov u'devash, flowing with milk and honey, the Land in which Divine intervention is to be seen on a national basis can only attain its destiny if the people "see," acknowledge the Divine Presence in every aspect of their lives. They must see G-d in the Land as well. These people experienced Egypt – both the slavery and the redemption. They saw firsthand the awesome miracles and wonders. This was followed up in the wilderness where miracles were a daily occurrence. They should have developed a trust in Hashem which would thereafter inspire them to fear nothing else in the world.

Unfortunately, the script did not play out this way. The very converse of this "seeing" Hashem in the Land, believing that nothing would stand in their way, occurred. They were guilty of niutz, spurning Hashem. This form of rejection is the highest degree of scorn, which does not consider the object to be worthy of consideration. It describes the attitude manifest by the people: They had nothing whatsoever to talk about. After receiving the slanderous report of the spies, Hashem was no longer in their equation. Their sin was a lack of re'iyah, seeing. Their punishment fit the crime: They would not "see" the Land.

Acknowledging the presence of Hashem in our lives is a staple of Jewish belief. It is how we find meaning and purpose in the seemingly ordinary moments, viewing them as opportunities for spiritual growth and connection with the Almighty. When we see Hashem in our lives, it spurs us to be grateful, mindful and develop a deeper understanding of the sacred within the mundane.

One can only see, however, if he is looking. If his vision is stunted by spiritual myopia, or if he refuses to open his eyes and look, he will not see. Consciously choosing to ignore – or blatant refusal to acknowledge – the potential threats to our spiritual/moral compass is akin to closing our eyes to the clear and present danger ahead. As a result, we fail to take the necessary precautions that would circumvent the challenges to our spiritual dimension. Being open to and perceptive of the realities – both positive and negative – that surround us are essential to our personal growth and that of our families.

Lo ira ki Atah imadi, "I fear no evil for You are with me" (Tehillim 23:4). The eternal words of David Hamelech should accompany a Jew throughout his life, so that he never forgets that he is not alone. Hashem is always with him. Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, related that prior to leaving his friends in the world of entertainment, Horav Uri Zohar, zl (probably the most famous baal teshuvah of our generation), they asked him for one parting joke (he had been a successful comedian). He agreed and related the following incident. Two students went for a ride on a motorcycle. They did nothing wrong and observed every rule of the road. This did not prevent an overzealous policeman from pulling them over and giving them the third degree. The two students were prepared with the correct answer to every one of his questions. He could not find a reason to give them a ticket. In desperation, he finally asked, "Tell me, how is it that you were able to ride so long without transgressing any of the laws?" They replied, "We have Hashem with us." As soon as the policeman heard this, he said, "Got you! Three riders!" He gave them a ticket. Rav Pincus sums it up: A Yid must never forget the ki Atah imadi; Hashem is with us.

The following story is related concerning Horav Yitzchak Aryeh Sekel of Michelstadt (Baal Shem of Michelstadt) who was a tzaddik nistar, hidden tzaddik, and a Torah scholar without peer. It is well-known that all Jews and gentiles that prayed at his grave prior to being inducted into the army during World War II returned safely. He was a descendant of Rashi and David Hamelech. News of his extraordinary abilities spread throughout the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. His reputation reached the ears of the Duke of Michelstadt who was impressed, but felt he needed to see this brilliance first hand. He summoned the young boy to his palace.

The duke was no fool, and he decided to put the boy to a test to ascertain if his powers were that be rectified with

stitches and cosmetic creativity. Mistakes happen. If this were cardio-thoracic surgery, however, an error in a centimeter can spell a death sentence for the patient. It all depends on the surgical site. The heart, brain or any such organ which is critical for life demands surgical perfection with no room for error.

Shabbos is unlike any other mitzvah. It is a core mitzvah upon which the principles of Judaism are established. If one does not believe that Hashem rested on the seventh day of Creation, then his belief in Creation is flawed. Shabbos is the heart of Judaism, the source of blessing, the fountain of life for a Jew. To desecrate Shabbos is to sever one's relationship with the Shechinah.

The flipside is shemiras Shabbos. When we see the punishment meted out for desecrating Shabbos, we have an inkling of the extraordinary reward in store for he who observes Shabbos. One develops a greater, closer and more meaningful attachment to Hashem's Shemiras Shabbos, allowing him to experience me'ein Olam Habba, a semblance of the World-to-Come. Obviously, the blessings apply only under such circumstances that one observes Shabbos joyfully, looking forward to the moment that Shabbos begins, and dreading when it ends. Shabbos is here for us to commune with Hashem and infuse our own lives with His kedushah.

One Shabbos, Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl, walked together with Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl, to Yeshivas Chevron. A number of cars passed them by. Rav Elya began to moan, "I have such pity on these drivers. There is no one who could impress upon them the stringency of desecrating Shabbos. Let us return. I just cannot tolerate this." Rav Moshe Aharon said, "But Rebbe, we are almost at the yeshivah. The closer we get in proximity, the chillul Shabbos will decrease."

Rav Elya agreed, but he still emitted a loud moan. At that moment, a car stopped, and its driver looked up at Rav Elya and asked, "How do I get to Rechov Yaffo?" (The man was obviously clueless to what he was asking and whom he was asking for directions.) When Rav Elya heard this question, he broke out in bitter weeping, "What should I do?" he cried. "Give directions, so that a Jew will continue along in his chillul Shabbos, or ignore the question? How can I ignore a brother who asks me for help?" Rav Elya once again began to weep bitterly.

Seeing this, the driver stopped, shut his motor and exited the car, "Rebbe! Never did I sense rebuke that was sincere as I do now. My mother is shomeres Shabbos, observant, and, all Shabbos, she screams at me concerning my lack of observance, but I never saw her cry bitterly over my actions. I see, Rebbe, the sincerity, the love of Shabbos and the pain you have if a Jew desecrates it. I promise from here on in to begin to observe Shabbos as a Jew should!"

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When Must I Check for Shatnez?

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

In previous articles, available on the website RabbiKaganoff.com, I discussed many of the basic laws of shatnez. We learned at the time that the prohibition of shatnez exists only if the garment is made from a blend of sheep's wool and linen, but that wool of other species does not make shatnez. Thus, wool made of camel, rabbit or goat hair mixed with linen is not shatnez (Mishnah, Kilayim 9:1; see Rambam, Hilchos Kilayim 10:2). ("Wool" means simply soft hair that is comfortable enough to use as cloth.) Therefore since mohair and cashmere are both varieties of goat's wool and not made from sheep's wool, the existence of linen in a garment containing them will not make it shatnez. At the time, a correspondent noted that in practice one should not rely on this, since manufacturers usually add less expensive sheep's wool to mohair and cashmere.

We also learned in the earlier articles that when a thread is spun from a blend of fibers, the halachic status of the thread is determined by what composes most of the thread's content and ignores the existence of other fibers inside the thread (Mishnah Kilayim 9:1). Therefore, a thread spun from goat hair fiber with a small amount of sheep's wool fiber cannot become shatnez, whereas a thread spun with a majority of sheep's wool fiber can. However, a thread of linen that is woven into or otherwise attached to a woolen garment renders the garment shatnez, and there is no bitul (Rosh, Hilchos Kilei Begadim #5 quoting Tosefta; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 299:1). Even a single linen thread in a large woolen garment renders the entire garment shatnez.

How should one check for Shatnez?

The first step in checking for shatnez is to read the label when looking at the garment. Although one cannot be certain from this that the garment is not shatnez, it may tell you that it is.

Years ago, I was present when a frum organization conducted a men's fashion show as a fundraiser. A local mechaneich was modeling a suit for the show when the announcer read the garment description over the microphone for all to hear: "This suit contains 70% wool and 30% linen." I will not describe the pandemonium that ensued.

Here is another example:

Following a lecture on shatnez, a woman came forward with a scarf for which the content label stated: 48% Linen 42% Wool 10% Cashmere.

However, one should never rely on labels, which are notoriously inaccurate. Here is an example: =

May one rely on the label?

Since neither storekeepers nor manufacturers take any responsibility for the content label on their garments, I see no halachic basis to rely on them. The concepts of *uman lo marei*

umnaso, that an expert may be relied upon because he is careful and concerned not to damage his professional reputation, and mirtas, that a merchant is concerned about being caught lying because it will affect his business, are true only when being caught with a lie or an error that will disparage their professional reputation. In an environment where we see that clothing stores feel no responsibility, legally or commercially, for the accuracy of the content labels on the clothes that they sell, there is no halachic basis to rely on those labels.

Even when a label is accurate, it describes only the material itself, but not backings, linings, ornaments, loops, fillings, button thread, etc., all of which often contain shatnez. It is even common that garments contain remnants of wool or linen thread in seams and canvasses that accomplish no recognizable purpose. For example, a number of shatnez laboratories have reported woolen sweaters containing remnants of linen threads in their seams.

Here is another example: A sweater purchased in a store in Boro Park, was labeled as 70% acrylic and 30% wool. This appears to have correctly described the exterior of the sweater, but no mention was made of the materials' of the lining -- which was 100% linen -- making it shatnez min haTorah. So how does one know whether a garment must be checked for shatnez?

Although all types of garments might contain shatnez, the halachic question is: When is the possibility of shatnez frequent enough to require that this garment be checked. The laws of checking are not unique to shatnez. Let us see if we can compare shatnez to other halachic issues. The most extensive discussion about checking for non-kosher items regards checking animals to see if they are tereifos, defects that render them non-kosher. This halacha is germane to all meat, eggs and dairy products that we consume, since the eggs produced by a tereifah chicken and milk from a tereifah cow are also non-kosher. So what can we do? If we were to check every chicken or cow for tereifos before we consumed any eggs or dairy products, this would drive up the price of eggs and milk considerably, since we would need to slaughter the chicken before we could consume its egg and the cow before we could drink its milk. Obviously, we all realize that halacha does not require this. So what does halacha require?

The general rule regarding checking these items is as follows: When a problem exists in more than half of a species, one may not consume the product of that species without checking. When one cannot easily check for a problem, and it occurs less than half the time, there is no need to check for a problem. One may eat eggs or drink milk and rely that the majority of chickens and cows are not tereifah.

Regarding meat, the halachic authorities dispute when one is required to check for tereifos. How high a percentage of tereifos is needed to require examination? A dispute over this issue developed in the early nineteenth century between two

great poskim, Rav Efrayim Zalman Margolies, the Rav of Brody (Shu"t Beis Efrayim, Yoreh Deah #6) and Rav Yaakov of Karlin (Shu"t Mishkenos Yaakov, Yoreh Deah #16 & 17). The Beis Efrayim contended that it is not necessary to check for a tereifah if we do not find that Chazal and early poskim required it, whereas the Mishkenos Yaakov contended that if a certain tereifah occurs in ten per cent of animals, one is required to check every animal for this tereifah. (The halachic source for this figure of ten per cent is beyond the scope of this article.) It appears that the accepted approach today is to follow the Mishkenos Yaakov's ruling and check for tereifos that appear frequently (see Darkei Teshuvah 39:3), although some contemporary authorities feel that the percentage should be closer to seven per cent than ten per cent. This percentage is usually called mi'ut hamatzuy, literally, a commonly found minority.

Do we compare tereifos to shatnez?

Do we do a statistical survey of shatnez found in clothing and see if we find shatnez in 10% of men's suits, ladies' sweaters, etc.?

The halachic sources do not imply this. Based on a Mishnah (Kilayim 9:7), the Rambam rules "Someone who purchases wool garments must have them checked very well to determine that they are not sewn with linen thread" (Rambam, Hilchos Kilayim 9:28). He does not say that it depends on the percentage of shatnez that we find.

For example, one early authority contends that whether we need to be concerned about shatnez depends on local market conditions (Rash, Kilayim 9:7). When hemp is readily available and less expensive than linen, one need not be concerned that a tailor would use linen (see also Taz, Yoreh Deah 302:4). The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 302:2) concludes the following: "One purchasing wool garments from a gentile must remove all the stitching and replace them with hemp," although he also rules like the Rash that one may be lenient when hemp is readily available and less expensive than linen. (We should note that there are authorities who disagree with the Rash and the Shulchan Aruch, contending that one may not be lenient even when hemp is readily available and less expensive than linen, because the tailor may prefer working with linen, which is stronger and easier to work than hemp.)

It appears that we do not use the rules of mi'ut hamatzuy -- that we statistically use 10% to determine whether we must check, for the laws of shatnez -- for the following reason. All the cases of mi'ut hamatzuy are when there is a natural situation that something happens -- wine sours, animals develop diseases or injuries that render them tereifah, or insects dine on vegetables. One cannot apply mi'ut hamatzuy to something dependent on the whim of a manufacturer, who is, after all, a baal bechirah. Thus, we should compare the laws of shatnez to situations where we are concerned about whether a product was adulterated with a non-kosher substitute. There the logic

is: Do we suspect that someone would adulterate the product with non-kosher? The answer is that we must be strict when we suspect that there might be a problem, and we are not required to be strict when there is no reason for suspicion. The same rules apply to shatnez.

With this background, we can understand that any garment that has a reasonable concern that there might be shatnez needs to be checked.

Cannot check in time-

What if I cannot get it checked in time, and I need to wear it immediately? Reuvein arrives in Zurich the day that his brother is getting married, but his suitcase did not end up on his flight. He has nothing appropriate to wear to the wedding, and there is no time to have a new suit checked for shatnez. May he purchase a suit and wear it to the wedding, and only afterwards have it checked for shatnez?

My suggestion is that he call a local shatnez tester or one of the major shatnez testing laboratories, as they may be able to advise which brands have a lesser chance of being shatnez, or they may know that a particular brand is mostly shatnez and it would be assur to wear that brand without checking.

Here is an actual story. The night of bedikas chometz, about 6 years ago, a yeshiva man called the Har Nof Shatnez lab. He purchased a new suit in Geula and wanted a "heter" to wear it on Pesach, relying that "most suits in Geula" are probably not shatnez. Although the particular brand had been shatnez-free in previous years, the shatnez checker knew that 700 suits containing shatnez of that brand were recently brought into Israel and some had been distributed to local "frum" stores. Based on this information, the "checker" told the consumer to do bedikas chometz and then bring the suit for checking. The suit's collar indeed contained shatnez, which was removed that night, and the suit was tailored the following morning. BH -- he didn't wear shatnez at his Pesach seder!

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Rav Kook Torah

Shlach: Rejecting the Land of Israel

“And [the spies] began to speak badly about the land that they had explored.” (Num. 13:32)

A spirited discussion took place at Beit HaRav, Rav Kook's house in Jerusalem, not long after the end of World War II.

The Chief Rabbi had passed away ten years earlier, and at the head of the table now sat his son, Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook. At the Sabbath table, one participant raised a disturbing topic: the phenomenon of visitors touring Eretz Yisrael and subsequently criticizing the country upon their return home. “These visitors complain about everything: the heat, the poverty, the backwardness, the political situation — and they

discourage other Jews from considering moving here,” he lamented.

Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah responded by recounting the following parable, one that he had heard in the name of Rabbi Samuel Mohilever, the rabbi of Bialystok.

The Failed Match

Once, there was a wealthy man who sought the hand of a particular young lady. She was the most beautiful girl in town and possessed many talents, as well as a truly refined character. Her family was not well-off, so they were enthusiastic about a potential match with the prosperous gentleman.

The young woman, however, had no interest in the match.

Rich or not, the prospective suitor was known to be coarse and ill-mannered. She refused to meet with him.

The father requested that she meet the young man at their home, to avoid causing him embarrassment. “Remember,” he said, “just one meeting doesn't mean you have to marry him.” To please her father, the young woman agreed.

The following Sabbath afternoon, the fellow arrived at the house as arranged and was warmly received by the father.

Shortly afterward, his daughter made her entrance. However, her hair was uncombed, and she wore a faded, crumpled dress and shabby house slippers. Appalled at her disheveled appearance, it did not take long before the young man excused himself and made a hurried exit.

“What everyone says about this girl — it's not true,” exclaimed the astonished young man to his friends. “She's hideous!”

Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah stopped briefly, surveying the guests seated around the table. “Superficially, it would appear that the brash young fellow had rejected the young woman. But in fact, it was she who had rejected him.”

“The same is true regarding the Land of Israel,” the rabbi explained. “Eretz Yisrael is a special land, ready to accept only those who are receptive to its unique spiritual qualities. The Land does not reveal its inner beauty to all who visit. Not everyone is worthy to perceive its special holiness.”

“It may appear as if the dissatisfied visitors are the ones who reject the Land of Israel,” he concluded. “But in fact, it is the Land that rejects them!”

A thoughtful silence pervaded the room. Those present were stunned by the parable and the rabbi's impassioned delivery. Then one of the guests observed, “Reb Tzvi Yehudah, your words are befitting for a son of your eminent father, may his memory be a blessing!”

Seeing the Goodness of Jerusalem

Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah's response was indeed appropriate for Rav Kook's son. When visitors from outside the country would approach the Chief Rabbi for a blessing, Rav Kook would quote from the Book of Psalms, “May God bless you from Zion” (128:5).

Then he would ask: What exactly is this “blessing from Zion”?
In fact, the content of the blessing is described in the continuation of the verse: “May you see the goodness of Jerusalem.”

The rabbi would explain: “The verse does not say that one should merit seeing Jerusalem; but that one should merit seeing “the goodness of Jerusalem.” Many people visit Jerusalem. But how many of them merit seeing the inner goodness hidden in the holy city?”

“And that,” he concluded, “is God’s special blessing from Zion.”
