

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita

Shelach



בס"ד

Torah WELLSPRINGS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mail@TorahWellsprings.com
718.484.8136

Weekly bulk orders in USA:
Wholesale@BeerEmunah.com

Weekly in your email free!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

Lashon Kodesh

באר הפרשה

subscribe+subscribe@beerhaparsha.com

English

Torah Wellsprings

Torah+subscribe@torahwellsprings.com

Yiddish

דער פרשה קוואל

yiddish+subscribe@derparshakval.com

Spanish

Manantiales de la Torá

info+subscribe@manantialesdelatora.com

French

Au Puits de La Paracha

info+subscribe@aupuitsdelaparacha.com

Italian

Le Sorgenti della Torah

info+subscribe@lesorgentidellatorah.com

Russian

Колодез Торы

info+subscribe@kolodetzstory.com



USA OFFICE Mechon Beer Emunah
1660 45th St, Brooklyn NY 11204
718.484.8136

ERETZ YISROEL OFFICE

מכון באר האמונה
רח' דובב מישרים 4/2
עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
025 688 040

יו"ל ע"י מכון באר אמונה

COPYRIGHT 2022 כל הזכויות שמורות

Duplication of this gilyon in any format, for any sales or marketing purpose, without written permission by Machon Be'er Emunah, is against the law and Halacha.

Table of Contents

Torah Wellsprings - Shelach

The Meraglim's Error	4
<i>Bitachon</i> for Everyone.....	6
Accepting Hashem's Will	8
Too Much Wisdom	10
Kalev and Yehoshua Trusted in Hashem.....	12
Prepare Your Heart, and Hashem Gives the Words	13
A Year Per Day.....	17
Like Ants and Grasshoppers	21
Self-Esteem.....	23
Guard Your Thoughts and Your Eyes	25
Tzitzis	27
Emunah	29
Beis Aharon.....	30

Torah Wellsprings

Shelach

The Meraglim's Error

The Sfas Emes (שלח תרל"א) writes in the name of his grandfather, the Chidushei HaRim zt'l, that "It was indeed naturally impossible for the Yidden to conquer Eretz Yisrael." Logically, the meraglim were correct with their report. It was impossible to win a war to conquer Eretz Yisrael. Their sin was that they failed to realize that Hashem's ways are beyond nature, and He can surely bring them into Eretz Yisroel if He so desires.

Kalev told the nation (13:30) עלה נעלה וירשנו אתה כי יכול "We will go up, and we will conquer the land because we can."

Kalev didn't offer a plan as to how they will succeed. He also didn't have a solution. But he told the nation that Hashem has

ways; we don't necessarily need to know them. Rashi writes, בפילו בשמים והוא אומר עשו, סולמות ועלו שם, נצליה בכל דבריו, "Even if Eretz Yisrael was situated in heaven and Moshe would command us to build ladders and to go up there, we would succeed in all his words."

The Piaseczna Rebbe (Eish Kodesh) taught that this is what everyone should do when he faces a problem that seemingly has no solution. He should place his trust in Hashem. Hashem has many ways to save him; the options are endless.

The Torah tells us (end of *parashah*), ולא תתורו אחרי... עיניכם, "Don't stray after your eyes." The Sfas Emes (שלח תרל"א ד"ה ולא) explains: Don't be influenced by how you perceive things because Hashem sees things differently. You think there

is no way out, but Hashem has a solution.

How would Hashem take us into Eretz Yisrael?

Rashi (*Devarim* 1:8) writes that had Bnei Yisrael not sent meraglim, they would have entered Eretz Yisrael and inherited the land without opposition and war. Rashi writes, באורשו ואין מערער בדבר, ואינכם צריכים למלחמה, אלו לא שלחו מרגלים, לא היו צריכין לכלי זין, "Come and inherit the land, and there will be no opposition. Had they not sent meraglim, they wouldn't need weapons." Because with Hashem's help and bitachon, everything is possible.

It states (*Tehillim* 121:1), עוזרי מעם ה' עושה שמים וארץ, "My salvation is from Hashem, the creator of Heaven and earth." We can explain that the pasuk is saying that

Hashem created the world from nothingness, י"ש ב"א, so He can also create a brand-new solution to save me. Even if it seems that there is no hope, ב"א, from nothingness, Hashem can create a way and send me His salvation.

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 7:) says that *talmidei chachamim* aren't obligated to contribute to building a protective wall around the city or purchase weapons because they study Torah, and the merit of their Torah protects them.

The Chazon Ish says that we can explain the Gemara in the following way:

Torah study trains people to have *bitachon*, and those who have *bitachon* don't need any other means of protection.¹

1. The Chazon Ish would often say, "Hashem helps at the moment when a person doesn't see any natural means for his salvation." Because that's when he places his trust in Hashem.

Bitachon for Everyone

Hashem's love for us is

eternal. Even when we commit aveiros, chalilah, Hashem's love remains with us.²

Rebbe Yochanan of Rachmastrivka *zt'l* explained: תשועת ד' כהרף עין, when people have הרף עין, which means they stop looking to other people for help, that is when they receive תשועת ד', Hashem's salvation.

The Chazon Ish *zt'l* writes in a letter, "I follow the counsel that the Chofetz Chaim would often say: 'One doesn't ask too many times from a human being.' Because what is man? Only Hashem can help."

2. The Baal Shem Tov told a *mashal* of a queen who transgressed one of the rules of the kingdom. The king was a man of judgment (מלך במשפט יעמיד ארץ), so he banished his wife and sent her away on a ship.

In those days, the crew at sea was independent. People were afraid to travel in that era because one never knew into whose hands he would fall.

When the queen saw the crew on her ship, she was very afraid. She didn't know that the king was on board, too, and that he was the captain of this ship. He had to send his wife to exile due to her transgression, but he didn't want his wife to be alone, so he came along with her. If she would know that the king was with her, she wouldn't be afraid.

The *nimshal* is, Hashem sent us to *galus*, but we don't need to be afraid, because Hashem is here in *galus* together with us.

If we believe that Hashem is with us, then, ultimately, we aren't in *galus*. As Chazal (*Brachos* 33.) say, כל אדם שיש בו דעה כאילו נבנה בית המקדש, בימיו, "Whoever has *daas* (awareness of Hashem), it is like the Beis HaMikdash was built in his lifetime." He will live calmly in *galus*, without fear and worry, just as when the Beis HaMikdash stood.

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* was once speaking with the Toldos *zt'l*

The Sifsei Tzaddik zt'l says that Hashem wanted

and the Baal Shem Tov told him, "Everything that happens to a person, and everything he hears, they are all messages from Hashem."

As they were speaking, a goy who worked as a handyman came by and said to the Baal Shem Tov, "Srulik, do you have anything that needs fixing?"

The Baal Shem Tov told him that he doesn't.

The goy replied, "Srulik! Srulik! If you seek well, you will find something that needs fixing."

The Baal Shem Tov said to the Toldos, "Did you hear the *bas kol* I just received? If I search well, I will find something that needs fixing. I will discover where I need to do teshuvah."

The Toldos replied, "I can't believe that what the goy said was a *bas kol* from heaven."

The Baal Shem Tov told him, "It isn't that you *can't* believe it. You don't *want* to believe it."

Later that day, as the Toldos was traveling, he met a goy whose wagon overturned, and all the hay was on the ground. The goy said, "Help me pick up the hay."

The Toldos was contemplating deep thoughts of Torah, and he didn't want to pick up the hay. He said, "The job is too hard for me. I can't do it."

The goy replied, "It isn't that you *can't* do it. You don't *want* to do it."

The Toldos remembered that the Baal Shem Tov said the exact same words earlier! He realized that the Baal Shem Tov was correct. What one hears and sees, and even when one hears a goy speaking, these are all messages from Hashem, calling him to come close to Him. The Toldos immediately returned to the Baal Shem Tov and became one of the Baal Shem Tov's close students.

to prove this to the Jewish nation, so after the Yidden sinned with the egel (and committed other aveiros) he told them to send spies to Eretz Canaan. Hashem's plan was for them to discover that naturally, they can't conquer the land, and then, when they do conquer it, they will know that Hashem performed a miracle for them. This would prove to them that Hashem loves them eternally, even after they do aveiros.

The problem was that after the Jewish nation realized they needed a miracle to conquer the land, they lost hope and refused to enter Eretz Canaan.

Hashem performed miracles for them in the past. They all witnessed yetzias Mitzrayim, the ten makos, and the wonders at the Yam Suf. But they thought this outpour of love was a thing of the past. After they committed such severe aveiros,

Hashem won't perform another miracle for them.

Accepting Hashem's Will

So far, we provided two explanations for the *meraglim's* error.

(1) They didn't have *bitachon* that Hashem would help them conquer the land.

(2) They thought that after sinning with the *egel*, Hashem wouldn't help them.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* tells of a third error that the *meraglim* made.

"The *meraglim's* intentions were for the benefit of Bnei Yisrael. The Yidden were living an ideal life. Moshe Rabbeinu was their teacher, they received clothing and food for free, and everyone was involved in *avodas Hashem*. The *meraglim* thought it was a shame that this ideal lifestyle should cease. Why should they come to Eretz Yisrael and need to toil the

land and be left without much time for Torah and *tefillah*? The *meraglim* knew they were sinning, but they sacrificed their souls for the benefit of the Jewish nation. Their strategy was successful because the Jewish nation remained in the desert for forty years.

Nevertheless, this wasn't Hashem's will. We must know that whatever Hashem leads us, it is for our benefit. Their sin was that they came up with this idea on their own. They should have trusted in Hashem's *hanhagah*." They should have trusted that Hashem knows what's truly good for us, even when it doesn't seem so to us.

The Beis Avraham *zt'l* said, "Wanting to learn Torah and wanting to daven well are great desires. But to want what the Ribono Shel Olam wants, that is something else entirely (a much loftier level)."

The Beis Avraham *zt'l* writes that this idea is alluded to in the song *י"ה פתח להם - אכסוף* - when we say *נועם ורצון לפתוח שערי רצונך*, which can be translated, "Open their hearts that they should want, *שערי רצונך*, what You want." Sometimes Hashem wants something we wouldn't expect, but we must believe that Hashem has a plan, and He knows what's best for us.

A chassid of the Birchas Avraham of Slonim *zt'l* wrote a letter to his Rebbe, expressing his disappointment that he had to be in America and couldn't be with his Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah.

The Birchas Avraham wrote back, "Wherever a Yid is, Hashem prepares a ladder for him on which he can climb up to reach the heaven. Yosef HaTzaddik's ladder was in the impure land of Mitzrayim, and from there, he reached his great levels. Now that you must be in America for

Rosh Hashanah, you can be certain that Hashem prepared a very tall ladder over there for you. It is anchored in the depths of the ground, and it rises to the highest levels. Therefore, accept your situation with love and joy."

Many people wish for a different life situation, where they will be able to learn better, daven better, etc. But we must believe that Hashem knows what's best for us. If Hashem placed you in a specific position (which we can't change), it is undoubtedly the best for you. It is from this situation that Hashem wants you to serve Him. You can become a perfect tzaddik from there.

Too Much Wisdom

In review, there were three approaches to explain the *meraglim's* sin:

(1) They didn't have *bitachon* in Hashem, Who is a *kol yachol*.

(2) They didn't believe Hashem would do miracles for them after they sinned with the *egel*.

(3) Their opinion was that it was better for the Jewish nation to remain in the spiritual setting of the desert.

The common denominator of these three explanations is that **they lacked temimus**. This means that the *meraglim* thought they were wise and understood things, and they didn't realize how weak their mind was compared to Hashem's thoughts.

Therefore, Hashem swore and said (14:35), במדבר הזה יתמו. The Chasam Sofer (ד"ה במדבר *Toras Moshe*) explains that Hashem said that they must remain in the desert until, יתמו, they get back their *temimus*.

The Baal HaTurim writes that the final letters of שלה לך אנשים חכם, spell

wise.³ We can explain that the *meraglim* thought that they were wise and that whatever didn't fit into their frame of logic couldn't have been correct. They didn't realize that their minds were limited, and they should trust Hashem.

The *meraglim* said (13:29), עמלק יושב בארץ הנגב, "Amalek dwells in the south." The Chidushei HaRim (*Likutei HaRim, Shlach*) explains that the south represents wisdom, as Chazal (*Bava Basra* 25:) say, הרוצה להחכים ידרים, "If you want to be wise, face south [when you daven]." The *pasuk* reveals that Amalek uses his wisdom to cause people to sin. Amalek tells people, "Think rationally, be wise. Don't be unrealistic." But that is the *yetzer hara*, because our rational mind doesn't understand everything. We have *temimus* and believe in

Hashem and the Torah even when it doesn't make sense to our rational brain.

The end of the parashah discusses the mitzvah of tzitzis. One of the halachos of tzitzis is that when performing the mitzvah, one may wear a garment made of shaatnez. How can that be? It doesn't make sense to our logical minds. If *shaatnez* is bad, why is it allowed when wearing tzitzis? We see from this how little we understand Hashem's ways. Therefore, after discussing tzitzis, the Torah tells us (15:39), ולא תתורו, "Don't stray after your heart and after your eyes." The Maaglei Tzedek (from the Rebbe of Dezh zt'l) explains: Don't consider yourselves so wise; don't be swayed by what you see and think. Keep the mitzvos as Hashem commanded you, and don't debate matters.

3. The Baal HaTurim explains that Hashem told Moshe that the spies should be חכמים וצדיקים, scholars and tzaddikim.

Our minds are too small to challenge and question Hashem's ways.

Kalev and Yehoshua Trusted in Hashem

The Torah lists the names of the twelve *meraglim*, and the Ramban (13:4) tries to understand the reason for the specific order in which they are listed. He writes, "They are not listed according to their flags and not in the order they were born. I think the Torah lists them according to their levels because they were *nesi'im*, and each was at a different rank and level. Some were greater than others in wisdom or honor, and the Torah lists them according to their level."

Kalev is listed third, and Yehoshua is listed fifth. This means that, initially, they weren't the greatest among the group. There were greater people among them. Yet only Kalev and Yehoshua passed the test.

The Imrei Emes *zt'l* explains that Kalev and Yehoshua passed the test because they were humble and understood that they couldn't pass the test without Hashem's help. So they davened to Hashem, and this saved them. Unfortunately, the other spies thought they could pass the test on their own, and therefore they failed.

Targum Yonoson (13:16) discusses Yehoshua's humility. כד חמא משה ענוותנותיה "When Moshe saw his humility, he called Hoshei'a bar Nun 'Yehoshua.'" He changed his name to יהושע, which means י"ה יושיעך מעצת מרגלים, "Hashem should save you from the advice of the *meraglim*." He received Moshe's tefillos, and this saved him.

Also, Kalev was humble and didn't feel secure that he could pass the test. Chazal (*Sotah* 34:) tell us that Kalev went to מערת המכפלה, and he davened at the *ktivrei*

Avos to be saved from this sin.

They trusted in Hashem to save them from sin, and therefore Kalev and Yehoshua passed this test.

The other *meraglim* were also tzaddikim, initially, but they felt that they could conquer all tests on their own. This was the root of their downfall.

Each person has their own tests. Be aware that you need Hashem to help you. Pray to Him, and you will have a better chance of succeeding.

Prepare Your Heart, and Hashem Gives the Words

The Ponovizher Rav *zt'l* traveled to Radin to speak with the Chofetz Chaim *zt'l*. The Rav wanted it to be a short visit because he had another train to catch. But the Chofetz Chaim talked to him for a long time, and he missed the train.

Later, the Ponovizher Rav heard that the train he had hoped to catch derailed, killing many passengers.

The Rav said, "It wasn't that the Chofetz Chaim knew with *ruach hakodesh* that the train would derail. Rather Heaven places into the mouth of an *ehrlischer* Yid the words he should say, at the right time."

The holy Chofetz Chaim yearned with all his heart to serve Hashem and to say things that would help others. Therefore, Hashem always helped him say the right words. This time, he spoke to the Ponovizher Rav for a long time, saving his life.

When a person truly desires to do Hashem's will, Hashem directs him and helps him succeed with his ambitions.

There was a time when the Ponovizher Rav was considering closing his yeshiva because he was having difficulty raising

funds. The Chofetz Chaim asked the Ponovizher Rav, "How many hours of Torah did you study today? Two hours? Perhaps three hours? I studied hundreds of hours today. Because I have a yeshiva where many *bachurim* study Torah! So, I have a portion in all their Torah studies! It is like I studied for hundreds of hours!"

This conversation convinced the Ponovizher Rav to keep the yeshiva open.

It states (Mishlei 16:1) לאדם למערכי לב ומה' מענה לשון, "To man belongs the arrangements of the thoughts in his heart, but from Hashem comes the tongue's reply." The meforshim explain that a person must desire to say the right thing, and then Hashem helps him. The Vilna Gaon (on this pasuk)

writes, "When you need to speak with a king or a high-ranking official, all you need is to prepare your heart to Hashem, and Hashem will place the right words on your tongue, which you should say. The same applies to Torah." When a person desires to teach and to know Torah (and he devotes himself to this study), Hashem will place the intelligence into his heart to teach and know Torah.

The same also applies to chess. When you want to give *chizuk* to people, Hashem will plant into your mind the words you should say. Man's obligation is למערכי לב, to prepare his heart with good desires, and then מה' מענה לשון, Hashem will help him say the right things.⁴

4. Give Chizuk to Your Fellow Man:

Reb Yehudah Neucshloss *shlita* tells that he was once walking with Reb Chaim Brim *zt'l* through the streets of Yerushalayim

when a woman approached them. By her haggard appearance, it was obvious that she was going through difficult times.

She said to Reb Chaim with excitement, "Perele is a *kallah*!"

"That is wonderful news!" Reb Chaim Brim proclaimed happily. "Mazal Tov! Mazal Tov! How I was waiting for this day! Thank you for telling me! I'm going to tell everyone! I'm so happy to hear. Who is the fortunate *bachur*?"

She told him. Reb Chaim thought for a moment, and then he said, "Do you know who you are getting for a son-in-law? Your daughter will be marrying one of the top *bachurim* of Yerushalayim!"

The woman's face beamed with joy.

"Have you heard of the Chazon Ish?" he asked her.

"Of course!"

"In my opinion, your chasan is the Chazon Ish of our generation. Did you hear of the gaon, Reb Akiva Eiger?"

Tears filled her eyes, and they began to fall, one after another. In a choked voice she said, "Of course I heard of Reb Akiva Eiger. Everyone heard of the holy tzaddik and gaon Reb Akiva Eiger."

Reb Chaim told her, "I think your chasan will be the Reb Akiva Eiger of our generation."

The woman cried and said, "How did I merit this? It must be in the merit of my parents' and grandparents' tefillos and good deeds."

"I don't think so," Reb Chaim told her. "In my opinion, it is in your own merits, and in the merit of your tefillos."

She left extremely happy.

Reb Yehudah Neushloss asked Reb Chaim Brim, "Who is this woman?"

"I have no idea," Reb Chaim replied. "But I could tell that she is a broken woman, so I thought that if this mitzvah came my way, I should perform it well, so I gave her some *chizuk*."

Let's learn two lessons from this story. One: Don't lose an opportunity. Everything is bashert. If you meet with someone, there is a reason. Try to do something good.

Two tribes originate from Yosef, Efraim and Menasheh. Both tribes sent a spy. The Torah mentions Efraim's tribe first. (Bamidbar 13:8) למטה אפרים הושע בן נון, 'From the tribe of Efraim [the spy was] Hosheia bin Nun.

A few pesukim later, it states (13:11) למטה יוסף למטה מנשה גדי בן סוסי, "For the tribe of Yosef, for the tribe of Menasheh, Gadi ben Susi." This time, the Torah mentions that it is Yosef's tribe.

The Ramban (*Bamidbar* 1:32) explains that the Torah wanted to honor both

shevatim - Efraim and Menasheh - so that they should feel equal. Efraim is honored because his tribe is mentioned first. Menasheh is honored because the Torah specifies that he was from the tribe of Yosef.

This reminds us to honor our fellow man and not cause him harm, even indirectly. And when we honor them, they can reach their full potential. Of course, it is impossible for a human being to be perfectly cautious, but when he tries his best, Hashem will help him succeed.⁵

Two: Chizuk, a kind word, goes a long way. Give chizuk to people. Let them feel important. It is one of the greatest deeds of kindness you can do.

5. The grandfather of Reb Eliyashiv zt'l wrote a sefer on kabbalah which he called *Leshem*. When this sefer arrived in Baghdad, the Ben Ish Chai put on Shabbos clothing for three days and he danced with this *sefer* under a canopy as if it was a *hachnasas sefer Torah*.

Twenty years later, the *Leshem* heard about the Ben Ish Chai's appreciation for his *sefer*, and he began to cry. When asked why he was crying, he said, "Look at all the notebooks I have in my *sefarim* room. All of these are *chiddushei Torah* that I never got

A Year Per Day

The meraglim spied on Eretz Canaan for forty days, and they were punished that they must remain forty years in the desert. As it states (14:34), במספר הימים אשר תרתם את הארץ, "Like the number of days that you spied out the land, forty days, a day for a year, a day for a year..."

From this, Chazal (*Chagigah* 5:) say, "Whoever sins even one day a year, it is as if he sinned the entire year."

There is a principle that מדה טובה מרובה על מדת פרעניות חמש מדה טובה מרובה על מדת פרעניות חמש, "Hashem gives kindness five hundred times more than He punishes."

The Chasam Sofer explains that if a person spends a day performing mitzvos, it will be counted

as he performed mitzvos for five hundred years. A day of sin is counted as a year of sin, so a day of mitzvos is considered like he served Hashem for five hundred years.

His reward will be enormous.

The Chasam Sofer says that this is hinted at in the words, למען ירבו ימיכם... כימי, "[Keep the mitzvos...] so your days will be lengthened...like heaven is above earth." The Gemara (*Pesachim* 94:) says heaven is a five-hundred-year walk from the earth. The Torah is saying that if you keep the mitzvos, למען ירבו ימיכם, it will be like you lived long. For each day you perform mitzvos, it will be like you lived כימי שמים על הארץ, five hundred years long.

This information gives us so much encouragement.

around to printing. If I knew that my *sefarim* are so cherished, I would have spent more time getting all my writings to print."

For every good deed, we will be rewarded as if we served Hashem for five hundred years.

This lesson also reminds us how careful we must be with time. Every moment can be counted like so much more. Each good day is like five hundred years! Not something worth wasting.⁶

Early one morning, the Rebbe of Radoshitz *zt'l* announced, "A special guest has just arrived. This is his first and only visit, so I want to honor him properly. The guest is 'today.' It came today and will never come back."

Reb Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l* compared time to a travel bag. If one packs his bag in an orderly manner, there will be plenty of space for all his belongings. But if one throws in items haphazardly, the bag will not have enough room for everything.

Time is similar. If one is cautious and orderly with his time, he will find a lot of time in his day. But if one is careless with his time, the days pass by quickly, leaving him without enough time to accomplish what is needed.

A student asked Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach *zt'l* how to organize his

6. "Father, it's late," Reb Nota Brizel said to his elderly father, Reb Zalman Brizel *zt'l*, who was studying Torah. "You should go to sleep. You can finish your studies tomorrow."

Reb Zalman didn't respond. He just kept on learning until midnight. At the time, Reb Nota was in the kitchen, eating a late supper. Reb Zalman said, "Reb Nota, it's late. You can finish your meal tomorrow."

The message was understood. There are some things that one just doesn't push off for tomorrow.

daily Torah learning schedule. Reb Shlomo Zalman advised him to set aside time every day to review what he had previously learned. The student replied that he didn't have enough time for that.

On Reb Shlomo Zalman's table was a *sefer* that he had prepared to gift to a bar mitzvah bachur. The *sefer* was wrapped in decorative paper and held together with a rubber band. Reb Shlomo Zalman took off the rubber band and said, "See how small it became?" Reb Shlomo Zalman explained that time is similar. It can be short, but by stretching it, one finds a lot of time.

Parashas Bechokosai states the rewards for keeping the mitzvos. One of the rewards is (*Vayikra* 26:9), וּפְנִיתִי אֵלֵיכֶם. The Chiddushei HaRim *zt'l* explains, וּפְנִיתִי comes from the word פָּנָה, which means ample, extra time. The *brachah* is that the tzaddikim are granted ample time to accomplish a lot in *avodas Hashem*.

(The Chiddushei HaRim would often repeat this translation, for it is indeed the greatest gift – to have time to do everything one desires in his *avodas Hashem*.)⁷

Some have the custom of giving a gold watch to a *chasan*. This is to remind the *chasan* that time is precious like gold.

7. When the Torah lists the *tochachah* (curses) it also states (*Vayikra* 26:17), וְנָתַתִּי פָנֶיךָ בָּכֶם. According to the Chiddushei HaRim's explanation that פָּנִי means ample time, why does Hashem grant sinners with a lot of time?

The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* answers that having time is a blessing for those who use it well and a curse for those who use time for sin.

The Lev Simchah zy'a added that the gold is only the case that surrounds the time. The casing is always less valuable than what it holds. If the casing is made of gold, it tells us that time is far more valuable.

Time is precious. With every moment, we can achieve so much. We just need to be vigilant not to get sidetracked by all the happenings of the world, which serve to distract us from Torah and mitzvos.

Someone was in Switzerland, waiting for a train, but when the train arrived, he didn't board it. His friend asked him why he wasn't boarding.

The man replied, "This train is uncomfortable. I am waiting for the next train, where every passenger gets their own table to eat on and bed to sleep in."

"But that train won't be here for many hours."

He replied, "That's okay. It is worth the wait."

"Is your goal to travel in comfort or to get to your destination?" the friend asked. "If your goal is the destination, you should board this train. It will get where you need to be."

"No. I need comfort, too. I'll wait."

The train finally arrived, and he boarded it with joy. He enjoyed a good meal, and then, exhausted from the heavy meal (and from waiting in the sun for hours until the train arrived), he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. When he awoke, he looked out of the window and realized, to his horror, that he had boarded the wrong train and was traveling in the wrong direction!

It was almost Shabbos – too late to catch a train to bring him home. He didn't even have Shabbos clothes to wear or a place to stay!

This happened because he focused on pleasure and forgot to focus on what was essential.

Similarly, in life, we must focus on our destination. Olam Haba is the goal, and Torah and mitzvos are the means to bring us there. We shouldn't consider worldly pleasures so vital until they distract us from where we are headed.

Like Ants and Grasshoppers

The *meraglim* said (13:33) וַיֹּהִי בַעֲיֵינוּ כַּחֲגָבִים, "We felt like grasshoppers, וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בַּעֲיֵינֵהֶם, and that is how they perceived us."⁸

Hakadosh Baruch Hu could have arranged it that the Canaanites shouldn't see them. Why did Hashem

allow the Canaanites to detect the *meraglim*?

The question becomes more pronounced with Rashi's commentary (13:32). Rashi writes, בכל מקום שעברנו מצאנום קוברי מתים. והקב"ה עשה לטובה כדי לטרדם באבלם ולא יתנו לב לאלו, "[The *miraglim* said], 'Wherever we went, we saw people burying the dead.' Hakadosh Baruch Hu did this for their benefit, so they (the Canaanites) should be occupied with their mourning and won't pay attention to the *meraglim*."

So, why did Hashem let the people of the land spot the *meraglim*?

The Chasam Sofer (Likutim ד"ה וְנָהִי) answers that it was for the Yidden's benefit. The *meraglim* caused the residents of

8. Rashi writes, שמענו אומרים זה לזה, נמלים יש בכרמים כאנשים, "We heard them say, 'There are ants in the vineyard that look like humans.'" That is how they knew that the Canaanites considered them like tiny insects.

Eretz Canaan to become very frightened.

The Canaanites heard that the Jewish nation was rescued from Mitzrayim, and the Egyptians were hit and smitten, but that didn't frighten the Canaanites. The people of Canaan considered themselves much stronger than the Egyptians, so they figured they had nothing to fear.

But then they saw the Jewish people were like tiny grasshoppers, and that frightened them. That is when they realized that the Yidden won the war against the Mitzrim due to Hashem's miracles, and they understood that Hashem could perform more miracles, and the Yidden would conquer them, as well.

The Midrash states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu forgave them for saying וְנִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כְּחֹגְבִים 'We felt like grasshoppers,' but Hashem didn't forgive them for saying וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם 'That's

how they perceived us.' Hakadosh Baruch Hu told them, 'How do you know how I had them think of you? Perhaps they thought you are *malachim*.'"

This Midrash is difficult because Rashi writes that the *meraglim* heard the Canaanites saying, נִמְלִים יִשׁ, בְּכֶרֶם כְּאֲנָשִׁים, "There are ants in the vineyard that look like humans." So why does the Midrash say that Hashem didn't forgive them for saying וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם, that the Canaanites perceived them to be like ants? That was indeed the truth!

This question can be answered with the Chasam Sofer's explanation, which we stated here. The *meraglim* heard the people of the land call them ants, and they thought the Canaanites said this derogatorily, as though they have nothing to fear. But, in reality, the tiny people they saw in the vineyard filled their hearts with fear.

Self-Esteem

The Sfas Emes (תר"ם) offers another explanation for why the Midrash says that Hashem didn't forgive the *meraglim* for saying וְכִן בְּעֵינֵיהֶם, that the Canaanites perceived them as ants, although that is precisely how they were perceived.

The Sfas Emes writes, "The *meraglim* felt they were small, like grasshoppers, and this caused others to see them that way. Because everything is dependent on man's attitude."⁹

This is an important lesson. The way you see yourself is how others will view you.

Many people suffer from low self-image and think everyone looks down on them. But you don't

know what others are thinking. Perhaps Hashem put into the hearts of others to look up to you and to consider you special. As the Midrash writes, "How do you know how I had them think of you? Perhaps they thought you are *malachim*."

But one thing is certain: If you look down at yourself, others will look down at you, too.

A *mashal* is told of a lonely yungerman who felt unnecessary in the world. He went to work daily, but no one ever stopped to ask him for directions. Even young children didn't ask him to help them cross the street. He was a non-identity. At home, it was the same. His wife didn't pay him any attention.

Once, he saw an advertisement for hats sold

9. The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* explains that their negative self-image was their primary sin. Therefore, Moshe told the *meraglim*, והתחזקתם, "Strengthen yourselves." Think good about yourselves.

at a very low price. It was years since he bought his last hat, so he took advantage of this sale and bought himself a new hat with a blue feather tucked in its side.

He decided to leave his old hat in the store – he didn't need it anymore – and walked out of the store proudly wearing his new hat.

Walking home, he was surprised when someone stopped him and asked for directions, and the children asked him to help them cross the street. When he came home, his wife greeted him joyously and inquired about his day. He was pleasantly surprised. It was a long time since his wife spoke to him with respect. He pointed to his hat, but she didn't understand. So, she asked again, "How was your day?" He pointed to his hat again.

"Is something the matter?" she asked. "Why

are you pointing at your hat?"

He took off his hat and realized he was wearing his old one by accident. He left his new hat in the store.

So, what changed wasn't his new look but *how* he looked at himself. He thought he looked respectable in his new hat, and that feeling of self-confidence caused others to respect him.

As the Sfas Emes teaches, "The *meraglim* felt that they were small, like grasshoppers, and this caused others to see them that way."

The Kotzker zt'l said that the *meraglim's* primary *aveirah* was when they said *כן היינו בעיניהם*, that the Canaanites consider them to be like tiny grasshoppers. Because why should other people's opinions matter to you? The goal is that Hashem should think favorably of you, not people!

This renowned lesson from the Kotzker is essential.

Some people are constantly thinking about the impression they make on others. "Do they respect me? Perhaps they look down at me? Are they impressed with me?" We shouldn't be occupied with these thoughts because our goal and focus should be to please Hashem.

Guard Your Thoughts and Your Eyes

It states in this week's parasha (15:39) ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם, "Don't stray after your heart and after your eyes." This pasuk obligates us to guard our eyes.¹⁰

In this merit, we will merit to see the Shechinah. The Beis Yosef (Even HaEzer 21) quotes Rabbeinu Yonah, "Whoever doesn't look [at women], will merit to see the Shechinah. This is his reward, *midah kneged midah*." He guarded his eyes, and therefore he will merit seeing G-dliness.

The Torah adds that we must guard our thoughts, as it states ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם, "Don't stray after your hearts."

The Chida (Kisei Dovid 27.) explains:

לא תתורו, Guard your thoughts and don't consider bad thoughts as nothing (since they are just thoughts) because אשר אתם זונים, the Torah considers these thoughts like זונים, an

10. At the beginning of the parashah, Hashem says שלח לך אנשים ויתורו, "Send people to spy out the land..." This ויתורו was a mitzvah, Hashem's command, but so much heartache came from it. Certainly, when the Torah says לא תתורו, that we are forbidden to תתורו, if people will transgress this halachah, it will be the root of much trouble r'l.

aveirah, like adultery. The reason is אחריהם, what comes after the bad thoughts. Bad thoughts can lead to bad deeds, *r"l*, as Chazal say, "The eyes see, the heart desires, and the body commits the aveirah."

The Baal Shem Tov *zt'l* greeted a certain merchant with much respect. People asked the Baal Shem Tov, "This merchant is a regular person. Nothing spectacular. Why do you honor him?"

The Baal Shem Tov replied that this merchant is only home a few weeks a year. Most of the year he travels and does business. Yet, he is always cautious with his thoughts and eyes!

The Baal Shem Tov said, "I don't see on him any improper thoughts!"

The poskim say it is impossible for a person to always control his eyes. Sometimes one sees something he shouldn't. And a person can't always

control his thoughts. Suddenly, against his will, improper thoughts enter his mind. These aren't aveiros. The aveirah is when one allows those thoughts and visions to linger and doesn't try to banish them. The aveirah isn't the first moment but the perpetuation of the matter.

Reb Shmuel Kaminka *zt'l* says that this is alluded to in לא תתורו, which can be translated as "Don't leave over" (from the word נותר, to leave over).

Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin *zt'l* (ד"ה לא אבוס) says that it is alluded in the words אחרי עיניכם, because אחרי means after. *After* you saw once, don't look *afterwards* a second time. אחרי לבנכם, *After* you had a bad thought, don't pursue and go *after* those thoughts again.

Reb Zelmele of Volozhin *zt'l*, a student of the Vilna Gaon *zt'l*, would walk on the side of the streets,

where there was dirty sewer water. People asked him why he didn't walk in the middle of the street. He replied, "Chazal (Eiruvim 18:) say, *אחרי ארי ולא אחרי אשה*, it is better to walk behind a lion than to walk behind a woman.' So, I prefer to walk at the side, where people don't walk."

Once, I was walking with my father, and my father took me through an area containing a lot of garbage. He chose that route because there were fewer tests with *shemiras einayim* there. He commented, "It smells better here."

Tzitzis

The Tur (*Orach Chaim* 24) writes, "One isn't obligated to buy a four-cornered garment to be *chayav* to put on tzitzis, but if one wants to wear a four-cornered garment, he must tie tzitzis on its corners. Still, it's good and proper for everyone to pursue the

mitzvah of tzitzis, by wearing a four-cornered garment with tzitzis on them all day. For the primary purpose of tzitzis is to remind us to keep all the mitzvos, which is something one needs to remember every hour and every moment. This can be compared to someone who asks his friend to do something for him, so he ties a knot on his belt as a reminder. Tzitzis have five knots, corresponding to the five books of the Torah, and four corners, so to whichever side he turns, he will remember."

Similarly, the Sma'k writes, "Although the *passuk* doesn't obligate one to buy a four-cornered garment, it seems that it's a great mitzvah to buy one, to remember the Creator's mitzvos."

The Alshich HaKadosh writes, "One might ask, 'How can you tell me that by looking at the tzitzis I will remember to do all the mitzvos? I wear tzitzis

every day, I see the tzitzis, and I forget to keep all the mitzvos!"

The Alshich replies, "We answer this question with a *mashal*: When people want to remember something, they tie a string around a finger to see it and remember what they have to remember. However, if a person ties a string around his finger every day but doesn't think about what this is to remind him, then when he forgets, he will say, 'How did I forget? I have a string around my finger. There must be something wrong with this string!' Wise people will tell him... 'Fool, since you didn't think about what the string is supposed to remind you, how could it remind you?' The same is with tzitzis. Hashem says, 'If you wear tzitzis and look at them with the purpose of remembering the mitzvos, the tzitzis will help you remember the mitzvos. However, if you wear the

tzitzis by rote, without the proper intentions, surely, when you look at the tzitzis, you won't remember Hashem's mitzvos. This is the intention of the *passuk*, וְהָיָה לָכֵן לְצִיצִית, להציץ, to look at the tzitzis so that you will remember. And then, וְרָאִיתָם, אותם וזכרתם את כל מצוות ה', by looking at the tzitzis you will remember to do all of Hashem's mitzvos. Whereas, if you don't intend to remember, how can it remind you?"

Rashi (15:39) writes that the gematriya of צִיצִית is 600. Add the 5 knots and the eight threads and you get 613. This is how tzitzis reminds us to keep all the 613 mitzvos.

The Gemara (*Menachos* 43:) compares tzitzis to a seal enslaved people wear. Tosefos writes, "Tzitzis is being compared to a seal because they would make clay seals for their slaves, and tzitzis identifies Yisrael as Hakadosh Baruch Hu's slaves."

The Or HaChaim HaKadosh elaborates: "The Torah says, וראיתם אותו וזכרתם, 'When you see [the tzitzis], you will remember all of Hashem's commandments to perform them.' The Torah means that when you look at the sign of your slavery, you will take heart that you aren't free to do as you please with your food, clothing, speech, and all your deeds. You will be like a slave who is afraid of his master. You will stand when your Master tells you to stand, and you will do all the tasks Hashem commands you to do."¹¹

Emunah

The Jewish nation heard the *meraglim's* report on Eretz Yisrael, and they cried all night, as it states

(14:1) ויבכו העם כלילה ההוא. They said (14:2) לו מתנו בארץ מצרים או במדבר הזה לו מתנו "If only we died in Mitzrayim or in this desert."

Shortly afterwards, they realized that they had sinned. It states (14:40) וישכימו בבוקר ויעלו אל ראש ההר לאמר הננו, ועלינו אל המקום אשר אמר ה' כי חטאנו, "They arose early in the morning and ascended to the mountain top, saying, 'We are ready to go up to the place of which Hashem spoke, for we have sinned.'"

All their fears disappeared. They were prepared to go to Eretz Canaan. This is because a Yid believes in Hashem. It sometimes happens that the yetzer hara confuses him, and he loses his emunah. But the emunah will quickly come back.

11. The next words of the Torah are, ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם, "Don't stray after your heart and after your eyes." The Or HaChaim explains that these are very difficult mitzvos to keep. However, when one reminds himself that he is Hashem's slave, that will give him strength to do Hashem's will.

The Tanya (ch.29) elaborates:

Yesterday, the *meraglim* told them (13:31) לא נוכל לעלות אל העם כי חזק ממנו, "We are unable to go up [to conquer the land] because they are stronger than we." Rashi explains that they were saying that the Canaanites are stronger than Hashem, r'l.

So how did their emunah and bitachon come back to them? How did they suddenly say הנו ועלינו, "We are ready to go up to the land"?

Moshe didn't perform a miracle before them to prove Hashem's strength, so how did they recover their emunah?

"Rather, this is proof that Bnei Yisrael's essence is to believe."

The Tanya writes, "This is a lesson for all people who have doubts in emunah. The doubts come from the *Sitra Achara*...but

the Jewish nation believes in Hashem."

A chasid told his rebbe that he has doubts in emunah and is very worried about that. The rebbe replied, "If it bothers you that you have doubts, this means you have emunah. You wouldn't care about the doubts if you didn't believe in Hashem."

There are times when emunah shines brightly in our hearts, and there are times that the emunah is opaque, but a Yid always believes in Hashem.

Beis Aharon

The 17th of Sivan is the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Aharon of Karlin, zt'l, the Beis Aharon. The Rebbe of Kuzmir zt'l called him "the *freilechen tzaddik*" because he was always happy.

People thought it was his nature to be happy, but the Yesod HaAvodah (of Slonim) zy'a said that the

Beis Aharon's happiness resulted from his *hischaszkus*. His nature was disposed to the opposite of joy. Still, he continuously focused on happy thoughts (the full half-cup, his successes in avodas Hashem, etc.), ignored all sad thoughts, and forced himself to be happy until he was always extremely happy.¹²

Once, the Beis Aharon rebuked his son for not being happy. The son said, "Father. I have other faults. Why do you reprimand me specifically about being happy?"

The Beis Aharon replied, "You have yiras Shamayim; I know you will improve your ways. Besides, you know when you do something wrong, I don't have to tell you. But when you are sad, you don't consider it a sin. You don't think it is so terrible. Therefore, I have to rebuke you and demand that you train yourself to be happy."

He also taught his *chassidim* to be happy. Until today, singing and dancing with deep devotion and the emphasis on joy are

12. The Beis Aharon (*Chanukah* p.48.) teaches this lesson from חשבתי אל עדותיך דרכי ואשיבה רגלי אל עדותיך. He writes, "Every person — also those on a low level — must consider every mitzvah and good deed he performs to be very significant. He must believe and know that every deed creates an imprint in heaven. With this awareness, one can leave bad habits. But if he doesn't consider his deeds special, he won't be able to change his ways. This is the meaning of the *passuk*, חשבתי דרכי, I consider my mitzvos *chashuv*, special to Hashem, therefore ואשיבה רגלי, I am able to turn away from my *regilus*, bad habits."

The Yesod HaAvodah explained the *passuk*, רק אין דבר ברגלי אעבור, (Bamidbar 20:19). רק אין דבר, there is nothing greater, ברגלי אעבור, than to overcome one's *ragilus*, habits.

integral aspects of the Stoliner chasidus.

Stoliner chasidim say that dancing is the highest form of praising Hashem because it is to praise Hashem with every limb of the body (כל עצמותי תאמרנה ה' מי (כמוך)).

A sad person frequented the Beis Aharon's beis medresh. Perhaps the joy of the chasidim helped him pull away a bit from his melancholic self. However, the nature of sadness is contagious, and he was drawing the chasidim down.¹³

The Beis Aharon told him the following *mashal*:

A family was traveling to a *chasunah*. The bride was aboard the wagon, and the joy was immense. A needy man standing at the roadside asked if he could join them for the ride.

They answered, "If you can be happy together with us, you can join us. But if you are going to be sad, you can't join us because you will ruin the atmosphere of the trip."

The sad man understood the Rebbe's counsel. His gloomy disposition mustn't ruin the happy atmosphere of the Stoliner chassidim. If he wants to be with them, he must be happy.

13. Reb Yisrael Salanter called a person with a frown on his face a *pit* in a public domain. He is a public hazard because he causes others to be sad along with him.

Once, moments before Yom Kippur, Reb Yisrael Salanter saw someone who was very sad, worried about his *aveiros*. Reb Yisrael Salanter said, "If he sinned, why do I have to suffer?" because, as we wrote, sadness is contagious.

In contrast, happiness is contagious, too. The Gemara (Taanis 22.) talks about two happy people who made sad people happy. In this merit, Eliyahu HaNavi said that these people were בני עולם רבא.

Another pillar of Stoliner chasidus is tefillah. They daven with loud, passionate *hislavhos*, based on the concept, הקול מעורר הכוונה, a loud voice rouses one's concentration.¹⁴

One Shabbos, a rav from a different city was visiting, and he heard the Beis Aharon begin *Baruch She'amar*. This rav also began *Baruch She'amar*, and he waited for the Beis Aharon to finish the *brachah* so he could answer amen. But all he heard were the loud shouts of tefillah from the Rebbe and the chassidim. After waiting some time, the rav assumed that the custom in this *beis medresh* was that the *chazan*

didn't end each piece out loud, so the rav continued to daven at his own pace. When he reached *Yishtabach*, he heard the Rebbe shout with all his might the final words of *Baruch She'amar*. He said them in the renowned Stoliner *niggun* ...יחיד חי העולמים מלך משובח... The visiting rav discovered that the tefillos weren't only loud and with *hislavhos* but also very long.

When the Beis Aharon was niftar, his son-in-law, the Rebbe of Sadigura *zt'l* said, "The יחיד חי העולמים, the one G-d, has remained the same. But the way my *shver* said these words won't be heard again until Moshiach comes."

14. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (6:1) writes, "Train yourself to say all brachos in a loud voice for this rouses the concentration (Shlah)."