



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Shelach

June 19, 2020

A Taste of Torah You've Got What It Takes

by Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

A study conducted between 1976-1997 revealed a fascinating observation. Early on in the study, a group of college students was asked to rate the importance they attributed to financial success, with a four-point scale that ranged from not important to essential. At the close of the study, it was discovered that each additional point of importance attributed to financial success resulted in an average of a \$14,000 annual increase in income (*Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, pg. 401). This study is a clear indication that there is a direct correlation between what you think you will get and what you indeed end up getting.

In this week's parsha, twelve great men were sent forth to spy the Land of Cana'an. They returned with a negative report, and the Jewish People believed it and spent the entire night crying. The disastrous results are still felt today, as G-d decreed that this night would be a night of crying for future generations - the ninth day of Av, known as Tisha B'Av, when both Temples were destroyed and many other calamities befell the Jewish People.

The Sfas Emes (Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter; 1847-1905) writes that the spies believed from the start, based on their assessment of the natural order of things, that they did not have the ability to enter the Land. Indeed, their assessment was correct. On their own, they did not have the merit or ability to enter the Land, and, having decided to take that route, they didn't get to enter. But their mistake wasn't in thinking they wouldn't be able enter. Rather, the mistake was in accepting

their own limited belief in themselves. When a person doesn't trust in Hashem, all he has is trust in his own abilities. That perception is limited to the natural order of things. However, when one's trust is focused toward Hashem, the limits of the natural world are suspended.

This approach seems to point to a lack of faith in Hashem as the source of the spies' error. However, the Talmud (Erachin 15a) clearly states that the sin of the spies was *lashon hara*, negative speech. So, was their error a lack of faith, or *lashon hara*?

The answer lies understanding the nature and root of *lashon hara*. While one should certainly exercise self-control and not speak *lashon hara*, the source of *lashon hara* stems from having a negative perception of things to start with.

One who only sees good wherever he turns will not have much *lashon hara* to relate. While some are naturally more positively inclined than others, we all have a path towards positive thinking, and that is *emunah*, faith.

Emunah in Hashem means to see beneath the surface. While things may seem bleak, we know that deep down, concealed by layers of darkness, is incredible goodness. It is that perception itself that leads to redemption.

The person of true *emunah* will have a positive outlook on life in general. He will live with a sense of confidence that his circumstances don't determine his success. In turn, his sense of others will be positive. Such a person will simply not have anything negative to convey as *lashon hara*.

Stories for the Soul

It Doesn't Happen Here

A tourist visited one of the great *tzaddikim* (righteous people) of Jerusalem during the 1930s. The discussion turned to the subject of living in Eretz Yisrael. The elderly *tzaddik* asked the man if he would live in Jerusalem. The tourist explained that he could never live there. The man explained that there were many strange and unstable people who resided in the city. Jerusalem thus seemed to be a city whose residents had a propensity to suffer from mental issues, making it a less-than-desirable place to live.

The *tzaddik* asked the tourist where he lived and the man replied that he was a resident of Denver, Colorado.

"Interesting," mused the *tzaddik*. "Someone recently told me that Denver is full of people who suffer from tuberculosis. Why would you want to live in such a place?"

The Denverite explained that most of those ill with tuberculosis contracted the disease elsewhere. "They only come to Denver because of its clean crisp air, in order to recuperate. It is one of the best places in the world to get better. They didn't get sick in Denver."

The elderly sage smiled. "The same is true here in Jerusalem. It is true that many sad cases live here. There are so many the problems developed elsewhere. They come to Jerusalem because this is the best place in the world to get better."

In this week's parsha, the spies deliver an evil report to the Jewish People. Their slander was based

continued on back

continued on back

Kollel Happenings

KOLLEL CLASSES CONTINUE VIA ZOOM MEETING

The Kollel is continuing many of its classes and offering new classes via Zoom Meeting. You can tune in to live classes online or call in on a phone. For a full schedule and the links and phone numbers to access this treasure trove of Torah, visit www.denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

HELP BUILD THE FUTURE OF TORAH IN DENVER

Claim your part in building the future of Torah in Denver! The Kollel is in the midst of a capital campaign to build a three-story, state-of-the-art Torah Center that will serve the entire Denver Jewish community. To contribute, or for dedication opportunities and details on the building, visit denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Do what you want | 4) Less for the baker |
| 2) A minyan | 5) Just one Shabbos |
| 3) Intestinal worms | 6) Beware of fakes |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael - Part IX

Another well-known personality of secular society who was friendly with Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael was the painter Rembrandt. In fact, Rembrandt etched a well-known portrait of Rabbi

Menashe in 1636.

Despite being propelled to fame, Rabbi Menashe had difficulty supporting his wife and three children from his printing press and position in the rabbinate.

A Taste of Torah

continued from front

It may be true that a very lofty level is being described. However, we can all begin climbing the ladder of *emunah*, starting from the ground up.

There is another layer on the journey of *emunah*. The spies failed to see properly through the lens of *emunah*, leading them to negativity and *lashon hara*. This negativity isn't only rooted in a person's lack of faith in Hashem, but also relates to a lack of recognizing Hashem's faith in each one of us. The spies had been entrusted and empowered by Hashem. They were to be the eyes of the nation, leading all to see how Hashem was lovingly bringing them to the ultimate land of blessing. They failed to feel and live with the confidence Hashem had in them.

This idea is quite relevant to us, as well. We, too, are messengers of Hashem. Day in and day out, we awake with a particular mission to bring the Divine light into the world. Whether we accomplish that directly through Torah and mitzvos, or through the seemingly mundane daily grind, Hashem set us upon this path. He wants us to deal kindly and patiently with others, and to fulfill his Torah and mitzvos. Can we honestly wonder if we have what it takes to succeed?!

With the help of Hashem, the day will soon come when we are able to look out into the world and only see good. If we can muster up the strength, that will be a direct result of our deep faith that all is, indeed, good.

Stories for the Soul

continued from front

upon what they had, in fact, observed during their journey through the Land. However, they perceived everything they saw through a lens of negativity,

instead of seeing the goodness that Hashem wanted to present the Jewish People.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Do what you want 13:2 s.v. shelach (2) | 4) Less for the baker 15:20 s.v. kismas |
| 2) A minyan 14:27 s.v. la'eda | 5) Just one Shabbos 15:32 s.v. vayri'yu |
| 3) Intestinal worms 14:37 s.v. bamagefa | 6) Beware of fakes 15:41 s.v. ani Hashem |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers