

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

SHELAH

JUNE 13-14, 2014

16 SIVAN 5774

DEDICATIONS: In memory of my great uncle, Haham Moshe ben Farha Bibi –
Morris Joseph Bibi whose Yahrzeit is next Friday 22 Sivan

SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH

Candle lighting Friday evening June 6th is at 8:08 p.m. Shir Hashirim 7:15 Mincha at 7:30 SHARP

SHABBAT Class at 8:30, Relevant Daily Halachot based upon the teaching of HaRav Ovadia Yosef Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:15AM
We will endeavor to keep it to the 7 aliyot, somech, samuch and maftir each week.

**Kiddush: Sponsored by Lisa Gaon in honor of Father's Day
And Happy Birthday Lisa**

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30
Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom/ Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach from 5:30 to 6:30
We are doing this program with the Bach and the program will be held at
The Sephardic Congregation for the latter part of the summer.

Pirkei Avot with Rav Aharon at 6:45
Mincha at 7:30 – Followed by Seudah Shelishi at 8:00
Class with David
Birkat HaMazon at 8:45
Arbit at 8:50 - Shabbat Ends – 9:08

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00AM, Mon and Thurs at 6:55, Tues, Weds and Fri at 7:00

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE - Men and Women are Invited
Monday Night Class with Rabba Yenai 7:30

Daily class with Rabbi Colish - Weekday 6:30 AM (ADDITIONAL NEW TIME Sunday Mornings 7:30)
Kaballah as a Guide to Spiritual Growth based upon the teachings of Likutei Moharan

We are pleased to announce a New Virtual* Class at the Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach
Thursday Nights 8:30-9:30 facilitated by Rabbi Yosef Colish. We will have an expert with us via video.
First Class: Thursday June 12th

Practical Laws of Shabbat for Sephardim

Most Ashkenazim will put nothing on the plata (blech) on Shabbat.
Most Sephardim will take a cooked dish, even with some liquid in it, and put it on the plata on Shabbat.
Most Yemenites will even take boiled water, put it in the fridge before Shabbat, and place it on the plata on Shabbat.

Is everybody reading the same books?

**Please join us weekly for a fascinating adventure into the customs
and laws of Shabbat according to our Sephardic Heritage.**

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Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame. Mincha at 4PM through October 30th – Please join us! 212-289-2100

Editors Notes

DOUBLE VISION

When two witnesses give the same testimony verbatim, we expect that foul play is afoot. Any good investigator will tell us that in virtually every case they handle, witnesses seldom agree on every detail. A detective always expects truthful, reliable eyewitnesses to disagree along the way. Two people can see the same events unfold and later on tell remarkably different stories.

We see this in the portion of Shelach which we read this week. Twelve men, all respectable and of stature, tour the land of Israel together for forty days. They witness the same events, the same citizens, the same products and the same country, but they return with two very different reports. One focuses on the dangers, the irregularities and fear while the other tells of the good, the beauty and the possibilities.

Hashem created and blessed us with two eyes. With our two eyes, instead of seeing the world as flat and two dimensional, a three dimensional world comes into view. Our binocular vision gives us depth perception. It allows us to see a little deeper.

The image seen by all twelve chosen to tour the land was the same, yet the perception and depth of vision differs drastically.

As a child I recall a teacher explaining the concept of "dan lechaf zechut" - judging all in a meritorious way - and telling us that we were blessed with two eyes so that at all times one eye can see the good while another sees the bad and it's up to us to decide which vision we want to take away with us. Life always allows two paths. This is our freedom of choice.

The theme of "two" seems dominant in the portion. We read "ish echad, ish echad", ...one man one man from each tribe should be sent. When the spies

return and give their report, Joshua and Caleb repeat the word meod, telling the people that the land is really very, very good. They continue repeating do not fear..... Do not fear. When Caleb counters the words of the others, he again repeats, "we will go up, we will go up and ... He (Hashem) can do it (conquer the land), He can do it."

When Hashem responds this theme of doubling seems to continue. He vows, they will not see (the land)... they will not see it. The punishment pronounced is that for every one of the forty days that the spies were in Israel, we would have to wander in the desert for one year. Again we see the doubling.... "a day for a year; a day for a year".

As you go through the portion, you will notice that there are many more "doubles" all the way to the very end of the Perasha where we read the paragraph of Sisit which we say twice each day in Shema. Again we see a doubling culminating with the final verse stating, "I am Hashem their God... I am Hashem their God." The mefarshim explain these doubles. Yet on the simplest level it's almost as if G-d is telling us that it's up to us to decide between the two in perceiving how we see Him and his world.

We know that as a result of the people's tear filled reaction to the report of the ten spies, that night of crying became a night where we've cried for thousands of years, the night of Tisha BeAv. It didn't have to be this way. Hashem wanted to give us the land. But we insisted in seeing with our own eyes forgetting how deceiving those eyes can be.

In the past we discussed that as human beings with limitation we typically don't see things as they are; we see things as we are.

We choose the way we see land. We choose the way we see everything in life. We decide which glasses to put on, the glass, half full or half empty. We all know people who dwell on the negative and others who dwell on the positive. We are told that beauty may be in the eye of the beholder. But isn't everything? Can't we choose to despair or have hope?

We all know individuals who seem pre-disposed to see the hand of Hashem in events; people in the midst of crisis, who can sense God's presence and maintain faith and optimism. We know others, who view ours as a material world that offers few signs of hope. These are the Murphy people who live by the creed that if something can go wrong, it will. And for them it usually does.

If there is not a G-d gene that plays a role in a positive versus negative attitude; if it's not nature, it must be nurture. That's what's so sad about the incident of the spies. Faith and Optimism should be part of our nurturing if not built in to our nature as the descendants of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel and Leah.

When we look at the words Shelach Lecha - Send for yourself - we can imagine removing the Shin and seeing Lech Lecha. This was G-d's initial command to Abraham sending Abraham to the land.

Contrast Abraham and the spies. Abraham comes from the north heading south towards Egypt while the spies come up from the desert towards the north. Opposite directions yield opposing attitudes. Abraham certainly sees the physical properties, the people, the produce and the land. But he also has vision of a future and faith in that future although Hashem has told him it is 400 years away.

The Torah often described Abraham as lifting up his eyes and seeing. He looks towards the stars, to the endless possibilities Hashem promises. Contrast this with the spies who saw themselves as grasshoppers in the eyes of the Canaanites.

Two people may experience the same scene, but each can choose what he sees and one chooses the interpretation and his reaction.

One of the most amazing books one can read is Man's Quest for Meaning by Viktor Frankl. He was a holocaust survivor and psychotherapist who suffered horrors at Auschwitz beyond one's ability to imagine. He writes, "Everything can be taken from a man or woman but one thing: the last of human freedoms, to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."

Whether nature or nurture, we are raised on the stories of our ancestors, of rabbis like Nachum ish Gamzu who taught us gam zu letovah- also this is for the good - that we should attempt to view everything that occurs to us as something positive from G-d. Stories about Rabbi Akiba his student who taught that even when we can't see the good we should know that's all that G-d does is for the good. Joshua and Caleb saw the same things that the others saw. Yet they saw the good.

Perhaps this portion which is so focused on two possibilities, two ways of seeing things and two attitudes that we can walk away with, ends with the paragraph of sisisit ,to drive home the point. The paragraph really focuses on seeing. "You shall see it

and you shall remember all the commandments." It's a message vision. When you see something, you have a choice in what you walk away with. But try to remember and consider what would my father Abraham have seen? What would he walk away with?

Two witnesses never see the exact same thing. When we look, what will we see?

Shabbat Shalom
David Bibi

PS Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan – Almost every American Orthodox Jew has been deeply affected by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan.

This Sunday, his family is dedicating a Torah in his memory thirty years after his passing untimely passing at the age of 48. The dedication will begin at 2:30PM at the Home of Micha and Ayala Kaplan at 1418 East 28th Street in Brooklyn and proceed to Mayan Yisrael at 3307 Avenue N at 4PM.

His works are part of our Jewish life. As noted in Wikipedia, the Rabbi produced works on topics as varied as prayer, Jewish marriage and meditation; his writing was also remarkable in that it seamlessly incorporated ideas from across the spectrum of Rabbinic literature, including Kabbalah and Hasidut. His introductory and background material contain much scholarly and original research. In researching his books, Kaplan once remarked: "I use my physics background to analyze and systematize data, very much as a physicist would deal with physical reality." This ability enabled him to undertake monumental projects, producing over 60 books. His works have been translated into Czech, French, Hungarian, Modern Hebrew, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

Most of us have used "The Living Torah" with its detailed index, thorough cross-references, extensive footnotes with maps and diagrams, and research on realia, flora, fauna, and geography. When people ask me what the first set of books I suggest they buy and read weekly, it's the "Torah Anthology," a 45-volume translation of Me'am Lo'ez from Ladino (Judæo-Spanish) into English. Rabbi Kaplan was the primary translator. When I was but a teen, he's guided me through Maimonides' Principles, The Universe, a Response to Missionaries, Sefer Yetzirah, Derekh Hashem and Meditation. Both Chantelle and I were deeply attracted to his works and his words brought us closer together.

JOIN AN HISTORIC TRIBUTE TO A MONUMENTAL TALMID CHOCHOM

30th YARTZEIT OF
RABBI ARYEH KAPLAN ZT"L
 Sefer Torah Dedication In His Memory

הכנסת ספר תורה

Hachnosas Sefer Torah
Sunday. June 15, 2014

2:30 pm At The Home Of
 Micha & Ayala Kaplan
 1418 East 28 Street

4:00 pm Procession To Mayan Yisroel
 3307 Avenue N

RABBI ARYEH KAPLAN
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If Rabbi Kaplan had an effect on you, please consider making a donation towards this Torah. Please email RabbiAryehKaplan@yahoo.com or call his son, Micha Kaplan at 646-296-4323. You can send a tax deductible contribution to Mayan Yisroel, 1418 East 28th Street, Brooklyn NY 11210. Dedicate a letter at \$18, word at \$54, Pasuk at \$100 or Parsha at \$1000.

Rabbi Kaplan was born in the Bronx, New York City, to the Sefardi Recanati family of Salonika, Greece. He studied at Yeshiva Torah Vodaas and the Mir yeshiva in Brooklyn. Kaplan received semicha from some of Israel's foremost rabbinic authorities, including Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Finkel. He earned his bachelor's degree in physics - with highest honors - at the University of Louisville in 1961[6] and a master's degree in physics at the University of Maryland in 1963. He was listed in the 17th edition (1979) of "Who's Who in the East" in the United States. Aryeh Kaplan's unusual warmth, sincerity and total dedication to Torah were an inspiration to the thousands he reached personally.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: Moshe sends the Spies on their mission.

2nd Aliya: The Spies return carrying the massive fruits of the land. They deliver their negative report and the nation loses its faith in G-d and Moshe.

3rd Aliya: Moshe successfully argues for the life of the nation, and Hashem issues the 40 year decree of wandering and dying.

4th Aliya: The Spies die, and the nation is informed of their own punishment.

5th Aliya: The laws of the Mincha - meal offering are stated.

6th Aliya: The laws of separating Challah - the dough offering, and the communal sin offering are stated.

7th Aliya: The individual sin offering; the incident with the man who transgressed Shabbos by gathering sticks; his punishment; and the Mitzvah of Tzitzit, conclude the Parsha.

Yehoshua 2:1 - This week's Haftorah relates the story of Yehoshua sending Kalev and Pinchas to spy out Yericho, their encounter with Rachav, and their report confirming the fear of Yericho's inhabitants. The connection to our Parsha is obvious, however the outcome of this "second mission" was far different than the first one 38 years earlier. The year was 2488 -1273 b.c.e.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them that they shall make themselves sisit." (Bemidbar 15:38)

In Czarist Russia, it was unthinkable for a Jew to achieve any prestigious public position. When

a Jew in Kiev managed to get himself appointed as the head of a bank, it was only because he had become so assimilated that his Jewish ancestry had been all but forgotten.

While visiting the seashore, this banker witnessed a terrible tragedy when a body was washed ashore. While it proved impossible to identify the deceased, because the deceased was wearing *sisit*, he was given a halachic burial.

The assimilated banker came to the realization that although he had renounced his Jewish identity in order to further his career, this was only applicable in his lifetime. He had put financial success before living the life of a Jew, but he did want to be buried as a Jew, so he began to wear *sisit* under his clothes.

Wearing *sisit* had a profound effect on the banker, and he gradually undertook to keep more and more *misvot*. He eventually was forced to give up his position at the bank, and went on to become a prominent member of the Jewish community. We learn from this never to despair of a Jewish soul.

As a Rabbi for many years, I always made sure to be aware of the level of each member of the *Kahal*, never to push anyone to do more than he is ready for but, at the same time, never to limit any member of the *Kahal*. Always prod and encourage all members to grow at their own pace, without pressure. Never to give up on a Jewish *neshamah*.
Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

“To the Tribe of Yosef, to the Tribe of Menasheh” (Bemidbar 13:11)

When the Torah lists the names of the spies who went into Israel, it attributes the Tribe of Menasheh as being part of the Tribe of Yosef. This is very strange, since it doesn't do so when mentioning the Tribe of Ephraim, who is usually mentioned as the son of Yosef only with Menasheh!

The *Da'at Zekenim* explains that since the prince of Menasheh was one of those guilty of spreading slander about Israel, and he came from Yosef Hasadik, who was also accused of speaking against his brothers, we therefore attribute Menasheh's words as being a result of Yosef's words. However, Yehoshua, the prince of Ephraim, did not say any negative report, so he is not attributed to Yosef.

Amazing! Yosef had lived hundreds of years before this episode, and what he said against his brothers was in a constructive manner to his father. Yet the Torah wants us to know that our actions and words may have far-reaching consequences. We should never think of our deeds as being insignificant. They may have an effect on our families and those we influence for many

generations. All the more so when we say or do good things, the effect can be phenomenal! Shabbat Shalom.
Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

SPIES - Rabbi Raymond Beyda

Raising children is not an easy task.

Although the Talmud lists five things a father must provide for his son, the task of molding an infant into an upstanding young adult requires constant vigilance on a 24/7 basis. To a conscientious parent, life seems to be a steady stream of instructions and commands, most of which have been given before but require repetition. The stubborn little ones just don't seem to understand anything the first time, leading to the parent's common refrain: “Why don't you ever hear what I say?”

Spies differ from children in that they are always listening. Espionage experts have developed electronic devices that can penetrate walls and make even whispered conversations audible miles away. The secret agent has an insatiable desire to hear every little word in order to catch the single significant fact he needs to crack his case.

Spies. Your children are spies! They live inside your home, listen to every word, and observe every action. Nothing gets by them. They notice any inconsistencies or contradictions in your behavior – things you are probably not even aware of – and base their own actions upon them. To their thinking, if a parent can “get away” with less than desirable behavior, why can't the children, as well?

Many parents, when challenged by their offspring, have defended themselves with “Do as I say, not as I do!” But experience shows that the best way to teach children is to model your own behavior the way you would like them to act. The Talmud says: “Things those children say, they have heard from the father or the mother” (*Sotah* 56b).

Keep your promises, control your temper, and act politely. The spies are watching and listening. They will mimic you – for better or for worse.

RABBI ELI MANSOUR We See What We Want to See

When the scouts returned from Eretz Yisrael and reported about their findings, they told the nation that the land is “Eretz Ochelet Yoshebeha” – “a land that consumes its inhabitants” (13:32). The Gemara explains that everywhere the spies went, they saw funerals. People were dying throughout the time the spies spent in the land, and they therefore concluded that Eretz Yisrael must be a dangerous, deadly place that kills its inhabitants. In truth, however, as the Gemara relates, G-d saw to it that people would die during the scouts' sojourn so that the inhabitants would be preoccupied with burying and mourning

their loved ones and would thus not notice the foreigners. The large number of funerals was actually a sign of G-d's kindness, yet the scouts interpreted it as a sign of His disdain for His people, that He was bringing them to a "land that consumes its inhabitants."

The Steipler Gaon (Rav Yaakov Kanievsky, 1899-1985), in Birkat Peretz, observed that people see what they want to see. Two people can witness the exact same event, or look upon the exact same sight, and see two entirely different things. Our vision is affected by our mindset and attitude. The scouts embarked on their mission with an interest in dissuading the people from entering the land, realizing that they would likely lose their leadership positions once the nation entered Eretz Yisrael. And thus when they saw the funerals in Canaan, they saw an "Eretz Ochelet Yoshebeha." They did not see G-d's Providence protecting them, but rather a dangerous land that should not be inhabited.

The Gemara in Masechet Gittin (45a) tells the story of a Rabbi named Rav Ilish, who was once imprisoned. One day a raven flew by and began chirping. Rav Ilish turned to his cellmate, who understood the language of birds, and asked what the bird meant. The man said that the bird was exclaiming, "Ilish escape, Ilish escape," indicating that the time had come for the Rabbi to make his escape from the jail. Rav Ilish felt that ravens were not trustworthy, and so he refused to escape until a dove came and began chirping. The man interpreted the dove's chirping, too, as bidding Rav Ilish to escape, and so he fled. Rabbi Akiva Eger (1761-1837) cites a source claiming that Rav Ilish himself understood the language of birds, and he notes that this claim seems very difficult to accept in light of the Gemara's account. If Rav Ilish understood the language of birds, then why did he have to ask his cellmate to interpret the raven and dove's chirping? Didn't he understand the meaning of the chirping himself?

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz (1901-1978) answered this question by suggesting that Rav Ilish indeed understood birds' language, but in this instance he did not trust his interpretation. He obviously wanted to flee prison, and was thus naturally inclined to interpret the birds' chirping as advising him to do so. Rav Ilish realized that people hear what they want to hear, and he was thus prone to deceiving himself by interpreting the chirping to mean that he should escape.

This is the one of the lessons we can learn from the story of the spies. We often approach matters with a

jaundiced eye, with a predisposed mindset that does not allow us to understand things correctly. In order to properly understand the world around us, we need to recognize ourselves and our natural instincts, and try to view things from a true, objective perspective.

Rabbi Wein Praying for Peace

The much heralded public prayer for peace and reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority took place this week at the Vatican in Rome. The event was hosted and sponsored by Pope Francis and included the participation of religious leaders and official clergy of the three main monotheistic faiths. But the main stars of the event were Shimon Peres, Mohammed Abbas and naturally, the Pope himself.

I am all in favor of prayer and I am certainly an avid supporter of peace. But somehow I have a queasy feeling about this public relations coup to promote the Catholic Church as the alternate diplomatic mediator in the Israeli – Palestinian dispute.

What makes this entire public event somewhat questionable is the fact that neither Peres nor Abbas are well-known for participating in either public or private religious prayer. As all of us are well aware, public prayer is a very delicate matter. Sometimes it is too public at the expense of meaningful prayer itself.

Even though public prayer with a minyan is obligatory in Jewish law and tradition, we are all aware that the moment of private and truly heartfelt prayer offered alone can also be most meaningful and spiritually satisfying. In my opinion this latest Vatican prayer session suffers from too much formality and publicity.

I don't know if it was possible, but if the Pope could have gotten Abbas and Peres alone in a room without media and fanfare and their true prayer would have been offered, perhaps the entire event would yet have proved to be of benefit. As it stands now, very little positive accomplishment is on the horizon from this overly advertised event.

Jews pray three times daily for peace. It is the final blessing of the amidah, the central prayer of the ritual prayer service. The reason that it is the final prayer of that service is because it encompasses all of the blessings, hopes and longings that the other preceding texts of prayer expressed.

The Talmud saw peace as being the proper receptacle that can carry and contain all of the other

prayers, benefits and rewards of life. Without peace and inner serenity even the blessings of family, wealth and physical well being remain somehow unfulfilled and unsatisfactory. Therefore peace and the prayer for peace are viewed as the most necessary repository of human attainment and achievement.

But even though we ask Heaven on a regular basis for this blessing of peace the truth is that the fulfillment of that blessing, as perhaps of all other blessings in life, is dependent upon us. We are taught in Psalms that we are to search for peace and pursue it. Peace is made on earth by human effort and Divine blessing. Heaven has created peace on high without the necessity for human aid and intervention. However, peace on earth also requires Heavenly guidance and encouragement but as in all matters here on earth what human beings do and decide has influence and consequence.

Apparently it is not sufficient to only pray for peace but one must search for it and pursue it in order to achieve it. And that is what makes our situation here in the Middle East one of such difficulty since it is not at all clear that the pursuit of peace with Israel is really one of the objectives of Abbas and the Palestinian Authority.

Nevertheless, I do not want to be the one to cast cold water on the Pope's initiative for praying for peace. Many times what we initially and even halfheartedly pray for becomes what we actually later desire and work toward. So this public media event at the Vatican can bear fruit if the parties involved internalize the wish for peace and pursue it.

Peace is always costly and imperfectly achieved. Many a wrenching experience must be undergone on the road to achieving peace, whether it is on a personal level or on a national level. To a certain extent peace involves sublimating memory and releasing the hold of the past on one's vision of the future.

In order for that to happen, since this is contrary to human nature, Divine assistance is vitally necessary. Hence, our thrice daily prayer to the God of Israel that He grant us the blessing of peace and the strength to pursue it. Again, I believe that prayer without the trappings of undue publicity and media notoriety is the most effective way of invoking Heaven's blessing upon us. I hope that all of the parties involved in this week's prayer session did so in sincerity and will truly pursue the search for the ways of peace needed so desperately.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Confidence

It was perhaps the single greatest collective failure of leadership in the Torah. Ten of the spies whom Moses had sent to spy out the land came back 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 are not able to 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." (Num. 13: 27-33)

This was nonsense, and they should have known it. They had left Egypt, the greatest empire of the ancient world, after a series of plagues that brought that great country to its knees. They had crossed the seemingly impenetrable barrier of the Red Sea. They had fought and defeated the Amalekites, a ferocious warrior nation. They had even sung, along with their fellow Israelites, a song at the Sea that contained the words:

The peoples have heard; they tremble;
pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.
Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling
seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of
Canaan have melted away. (Ex. 15: 14-15)

They should have known that the people of the land were afraid of them, not the other way round. And so it was, as Rahab told the spies sent by Joshua forty years later:

I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. (Joshua 2: 9-11)

Only Joshua and Caleb among the twelve showed leadership. They told the people that the conquest of the land was eminently achievable because God was with them. The people did not listen. But the two

leaders received their reward. They alone of their generation lived to enter the land. More than that: their defiant statement of faith and their refusal to be afraid shines as brightly now as it did thirty-three centuries ago. They are eternal heroes of faith.

One of the fundamental tasks of any leader from president to parent is to give people a sense of confidence: in themselves, in the group of which they are a part, and in the mission itself. A leader must have faith in the people he or she leads, and inspire that faith in them. As Rosabeth Moss Kanter of the Harvard Business School writes in her book *Confidence*, "Leadership is not about the leader, it is about how he or she builds the confidence of everyone else." [1] Confidence, by the way, is Latin for "having faith together."

The truth is that in no small measure a law of self-fulfilling prophecy applies in the human arena. Those who say, "We cannot do it" are probably right, as are those who say, "We can." If you lack confidence you will lose. If you have it – solid, justified confidence based on preparation and past performance – you will win. Not always, but often enough to triumph over setbacks and failures. That, as mentioned in a previous Covenant and Conversation, is what the story of Moses' hands is about, during the battle against the Amalekites. When the Israelites look up, they win. When they look down they start to lose.

That is why the negative definition of Jewish identity that has so often prevailed in modern times (Jews are the people who are hated, Israel is the nation that is isolated, to be Jewish is to refuse to grant Hitler a posthumous victory) is so misconceived, and why one-in-two Jews who have been brought up on this doctrine choose to marry out and discontinue the Jewish journey.

Harvard economic historian David Landes in his *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* explores the question of why some countries fail to grow economically while others succeed spectacularly. After more than 500 pages of close analysis, he reaches this conclusion:

In this world, the optimists have it, not because they are always right, but because they are positive. Even when wrong, they are positive, and that is the way of achievement, correction, improvement, and success. Educated, eyes-open optimism pays; pessimism can only offer the empty consolation of being right. [2]

I prefer the word "hope" to "optimism." Optimism is the belief that things will get better; hope is the belief that together we can make things better. No Jew, knowing Jewish history, can be an optimist, but no Jew worthy of the name abandons hope. The most

pessimistic of the prophets, from Amos to Jeremiah, were still voices of hope. By their defeatism, the spies failed as leaders and as Jews. To be a Jew is to be an agent of hope.

The most remarkable by far of all the commentators on the episode of the spies was the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. He raised the obvious question. The Torah emphasizes that the spies were all leaders, princes, heads of tribes. They knew that God was with them, and that with His help there was nothing they could not do. They knew that God would not have promised them a land they could not conquer. Why then did they come back with a negative report?

His answer turns the conventional understanding of the spies upside down. They were, he said, not afraid of defeat. They were afraid of victory. What they said to the people was one thing, but what led them to say it was another entirely.

What was their situation now, in the wilderness? They lived in close and continuous proximity to God. They drank water from a rock. They ate manna from heaven. They were surrounded by the Clouds of Glory. Miracles accompanied them along the way.

What would be their situation in the land? They would have to fight wars, plough the land, plant seed, gather harvests, create and sustain an army, an economy and a welfare system. They would have to do what every other nation does: live in the real world of empirical space. What then would happen to their relationship with God? Yes, He would still be present in the rain that made crops grow, in the blessings of field and town, and in the Temple in Jerusalem that they would visit three times a year, but not visibly, intimately, miraculously, as He was in the desert. This is what the spies feared: not failure but success.

This, said the Rebbe, was a noble sin but still a sin. God wants us to live in the real world of nations, economies and armies. God wants us, as he put it, to create "a dwelling place in the lower world." He wants us to bring the Shekhinah, the Divine presence, into everyday life. It is easy to find God in total seclusion and escape from responsibility. It is hard to find God in the office, in business, in farms and fields and factories and finance. But it is that hard challenge to which we are summoned: to create a space for God in the midst of this physical world that He created and seven times pronounced good. That is what ten of the spies failed to understand, and it was a spiritual failure that condemned an entire generation to forty years of futile wandering.

The Rebbe's words ring true today even more loudly than they did when he first spoke them. They are a profound statement of the Jewish task. They are also a fine exposition of a concept that entered psychology only relatively recently – fear of success.[3] We are all familiar with the idea of fear of failure. It is what keeps many of us from taking risks, preferring instead to stay within our comfort zone.

No less real, though, is fear of success. We want to succeed: so we tell ourselves and others. But often unconsciously we fear what success may bring: new responsibilities, expectations on the part of others that we may find hard to fulfil, and so on. So we fail to become what we might have become had someone given us faith in ourselves.

The antidote to fear, both of failure and success, lies in the passage with which the parsha ends: the command of tzitzit (Num. 15: 38-41). We are commanded to place fringes on our garments, with among them a thread of blue. Blue is the colour of the sky and of heaven. Blue is the colour we see when we look up (at least in Israel; in Britain, more often than not we see clouds). When we learn to look up, we overcome our fears. Leaders give people confidence by teaching them to look up. We are not grasshoppers unless we think we are.

[1] Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Confidence, Random House, 2005, 325.

[2] David Landes, The Wealth and Poverty of Nations, London, Little, Brown, 1998, 524.

[3] Sometimes called the "Jonah complex" after the prophet. See Abraham Maslow, The farther reaches of human nature, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977, 35-40

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"And you will see it and you will remember all the Mitzvot of Hashem and you will do them" (15:39)

The Mitzvah of Sisit is a Commandment which is categorized as an 'Edut', Testimony. An Edut testifies to Historical events or great principles. Since we can understand the Edut more easily, therefore they are more obligatory for us to do them. Principle: "Whatever is easier to do is more obligatory".

Some examples of Edut are:

Matzah – to recall being slaves in Egypt.

Sisit – to remember the Mitzvot.

Mezuzah – reminds us that this is a Holy home given to us by Hashem.

Teffilin – reminds us that Hashem took us out of Egypt. And that the words of Torah should be on our lips.

Pesach – Yetziat Mitzrayim.

Shabbat – that Hashem created the world from nothing (ex nihilo).

The verse says that when we look at the Sisit we should remember all of the (613) Mitzvot. This would necessitate the knowledge of all the Mitzvot and include a special effort to perform. The Rabbis tell us, "If a person tries to do too much at one time he will not accomplish anything". Therefore, when we gather the 4 Sisit every morning during the Shema prayer, lets try to think and 'remember' at least the following 4 Sisit which will fulfill 4 Commandments from our Torah.

1. "To gain fear/awareness of Hashem" – think that Hashem is looking at you. "Et Hashem Elokecha tira"

2. "To Love Hashem" – say, 'I Love You Hashem'. "Veahabta Et Hashem Elokecha Bechal Lebabecha"

3. "To Thank Hashem" – Thank Him for Everything. "Tob Lehodot LeHashem"

4. "To Love your fellow Jew & Jewish Nation" – Hashem created the world for Am Yisrael. "Beni Bechori Yisrael".

We must listen to the testimony of the Edut as they were made in order to speak to us. When you see 'Sisit', your neighbor's or your own, remind yourself of the Mitzvot. By thinking into the Edut/Testimonies of our Torah you will produce a diamond and a collection of gems in your mind which will give you pleasure in this world and in the next world forever.

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