

## INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

*Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholar's Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.*

### ויקרא משה להושע בן נון יהושע

**“And Moshe called Hoshea bin Nun – Yehoshua.” (13:16)**

According to *Rashi*, Moshe prayed for him saying, “May Hashem save you from the thinking of the spies!” *Calev*, too, was in danger, so much so that he went to the cave of the Patriarchs to pray that the spies do not influence him negatively. Asks *R' Yechezkel Levinstein*, “Weren't *Yehoshua* and *Calev* very firm in their convictions and faith? Why were special prayers necessary to save them from following after the others?”

From here we gain an important insight into how powerful the influence of the company that one keeps truly is. If a person associates with a certain group, he cannot avoid tending to think, speak and act like them. He becomes part of an entity and takes on the different traits and characteristics of that entity, whether the group's influence is positive or not. At the same time, we also see the great power of prayer. If a person must associate with evil elements, prayer has the power to save him from what otherwise is inevitable decline. In fact, *only* through prayer can he avoid being dragged down to the depths where the others are found. (*Torah Anthology*)

### ונהי בעינינו כחגבים וכן היינו בעיניהם

**“And in our eyes, we were as grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes.” (13:33)**

*Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* teaches, “You said that you saw yourselves as grasshoppers. Hashem says, ‘Who told you that in *their* eyes you did not appear as angels?’”

This is what happens, writes the *Chafetz Chaim*, when a person loses faith in Hashem. He will lose faith in himself and will fail to recognize his own true worth. He will think that others see him as a grasshopper, when really, he is an angel in their eyes. When people lose their self-esteem, and regard themselves as less than they really are, until they see themselves as insects or other lower creatures, they automatically feel that others see them this way, too. “In our eyes we were as grasshoppers.” Therefore, “and so we were in their eyes.” Here is clear proof that the spies had lost their belief in Hashem. (*Talelei Oros*)

### ויאמר ה' סלחתי כדבריו

**“G-d said, ‘I have forgiven according to your words.’” (14:20)**

“According to your words” – according to the sincerity and effort you put into your words, you can affect forgiveness. (*Likutei Halachot*)

**ועבדי כלב עקב היתה רוח אחרת עמו**

**“And my servant, Kalev, because he had another spirit with him...” (14:24)**

The verse does not mention any reward for *Yehoshua* as it did for *Kalev*, because *Moshe* blessed *Yehoshua* that he be saved from the spies' scheme. But no one blessed *Kalev* and he saved himself. *Kalev* risked his life and shouted out against the spies, insisting that the people would inherit the land and that it was good. For this reason, Hashem gave him a separate reward.

(*Toldos Yitzchak*)

**עד מתי לעדה הרעה הזאת אשר המה מלינים עלי**

**“How long will this wicked community that complains against Me continue to exist?” (14:27)**

We learn from this verse that an *eidah* (quorum) comprises ten men (*Sanhedrin* 74b, *Rashi*). The most common need for a quorum is public prayer. Why do we learn the details for such a holy purpose from wicked people?

There will always be people who oppose holiness and groups that cause damage to the community. We must learn from them that if their quorum can cause damage, how much more can a quorum of people engaged in spiritual building rectify others?! Thus, from the wicked, we learn the power of good.

(*Likutei Halachot*)

**במדבר הזה יפלו פגריכם**

**“In this wilderness, your carcasses shall fall.” (14:29)**

We are taught that there is repentance for each sin and here as well *Bnei Yisrael* repented immediately and were sorry, saying: *Lo, we are here and will go up to the place which Hashem has promised, for we have sinned* (14:40). Why then were they not forgiven and their decree so harsh?

All their sins were forgiven, even the *Cheit HaEgel*. Only the sin of the spies was unforgivable. Every sin, whether it is against man or Hashem, once appeasement is performed, his repentance is accepted. This is true except for a sin against an entire nation. In this instance, neither repentance nor remorse is of any use. *All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword* (*Amos* 9:10).

(*Rabbi Yitzchok Elchanan of Kovno*)

Their repentance was not accepted, as it states *Go not up for Hashem is not among you*. According to the literal translation of the words – *אשר אמר ה' כי חטאנו* - Hashem is the one who said that we sinned, but they themselves did not admit to their sin!

(*Aron Aidut*)

**והיה לכם לציצית...וראיתם אתו...ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם**

**“You will see them...then you will not stray after your hearts and after your eyes.” (15:39)**

The word *ציצית* is related to the word *להציץ* which means to look. *Tzitzit* help a person see beyond the material world and nullify himself before G-d. They keep a person from straying after the pleasures of this world. *Tzitzit* also keep a person from straying after the evil eye, since “*you will see them*” – i.e., your sight will be rectified.

(*Likutei Halachot*)