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went down and stayed down. Shocked, the grocer murmured, "I can't believe what I'm seeing." He had no choice but to put the groceries on the other side of the scale. The scales did not balance as he continued to put more and more groceries on until the scales could hold no more. And it still wouldn't balance!

Finally, he grabbed the piece of paper off the scales and looked at it with wide eyes. It was not a grocery list at all; it was actually a prayer which read, "Please G-d, You know my needs and I am leaving this in Your hands." The stunned grocer gave her the groceries that he had placed on the scale and stood in awed silence as she thanked him and left the store. The wealthy customer handed him a fifty-dollar bill and said, "This should cover it. And believe me, it was worth every penny!"

It wasn't until later that day that the burly grocer discovered that his scale was actually broken and only one side would go down! But he did understand, all too well, that only G-d knows the full weight of a heartfelt prayer!

TORAH GEMS

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The Torah states, "*The Almighty did not lead them by the land of the Philistines, for the Almighty said perhaps the people will regret (leaving Egypt) when they see warfare and will return to Egypt.*" How is it possible that after all that the Jewish people suffered in Egypt for so many years, and after seeing all of the miracles that the Almighty performed for them, that they could even consider going back? They were obviously smart enough to realize that if *Hashem* did miracles to redeem them, he would surely protect them from their enemies in the desert?

R' Yehuda Leib Chasman ZT"l comments that a person is a mixture of a body and a soul, physicality and spirituality. As a result, even when a person is on a very high spiritual level, he can still fall back down. One needs constant vigilance. At any given moment a person can become extremely elevated. However, if he panics and behaves in an immature way he can lose that lofty plateau. Although the *Bnei Yisroel* had a great awareness of *Hashem* and His salvation, there always remained the threat that it could be lost in a short time. Their high spiritual level could come crashing down.

This same concept, though, can give one hope. If one can fall quickly, one can pick himself up quickly, too. Never despair when you feel that you are on a low level. If you are sincerely resolved to climb spiritually, you have the ability to instantaneously put yourself back on the path of life. Realize that you can obtain great heights at any moment if you have the determination to do so!

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מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים

(é-âé) 'ä úàùè úá ààøà àáöéúä ààøéú à àüî øîâéä .. 'ä à ààøùè éä ä÷öéä

A poor and disheveled woman walked into a grocery store. She approached the owner of the store behind the counter in a most humble manner and asked if he would allow her to charge a few groceries. She softly explained that her husband was very ill and unable to work, she had seven children and they needed food. She would do whatever it takes to pay him back if he would just allow her to buy on credit this one time.

The grocer, a big gruff man, scoffed at her request and suggested that she leave his store if she had not the money. Visualizing her family's needs she pleaded again. "Please, sir, I will bring you the money as soon as I get it." The grocer was not the compassionate sort and threatened to have her forcibly removed if she did not leave on her own. He told her that he would absolutely not extend her credit and she had better leave. The woman was crestfallen and looked around the store for assistance of any kind. A well-to-do customer who overheard the conversation between the poor woman and the grocer said that he would cover the cost of whatever she needed for her family. But the grocer decided to have a little fun first. "Alright. I'll tell you what," he said to her, "put your grocery list on the scale and whatever your list weighs, I will give you that amount in food."

The woman at first didn't understand. But after considering it over for a moment, she reached into her purse, took out a piece of paper and scribbled something on it. She then laid the piece of paper on the scale carefully with her head bowed. The grocer and the customers stared in amazement as the scales