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with blessings and true appreciation that made each and every one of the good-news-bearers feel as if he had personally uplifted the spirit of the *Rov*. Such was the greatness of the *Kovner Rov*, who appreciated the good tidings to such an extent, that each time he heard it, he felt as if it was for the very first time.

## TORAH GEMS

...äøø í à àèä ääâèä ää áúé àâä øùà õøää äîâ  
(é-ä) íèä í à õò ää úèä äæø í à àèä äðîùä õøää äîâ

Moshe asked the *meraglim* - spies, to report on six issues; two about the inhabitants of the land, two about the cities, and two about the agriculture. Regarding the population of Canaan, the spies were to find out whether or not they were strong and populous. As for the cities, they were asked regarding the people: are they a group of tent-dwellers, or are they concentrated into large fortress-like metropolises? Finally, Moshe instructed the scouts to report on the agriculture. "*How is the land - is it plentiful or lacking*" - meaning is the soil fertile? Also, "*Are there trees there or not?*" Trees are especially important, as they provided fruits and wood for fire and building.

**R' Moshe Alshich ZT"l** writes that Moshe wished to show them that the fear of *Bnei Yisroel's* imminent conquest gripped the people of Canaan. The fortresses indicated that the population lived in fear, and despite their formidable strength, they still felt the need to protect themselves by surrounding their cities with walls. The *Medrash* states that when *Bnei Yisroel* left Egypt, the Canaanim uprooted all the fruit trees in the land in order that *Bnei Yisroel* not benefit from any of the fruits. This is one of the reasons why *Hashem* delayed the Jews in the desert. When they saw that *Bnei Yisroel* were stalled in the wilderness, they replanted the trees. Moshe therefore told the scouts, "*How is the land - is it plentiful?*" But even more so, pay attention to the vegetation: "*Are there trees there or not?*" Notice that the trees are young, reflecting the fear that has been instilled within the inhabitants of the land. Thus, victory is guaranteed!

(èì-àè) 'ăăă í úøëää áúää í úéàøå úöëöì í ëì äëää

We find a common thread that relates the theme of the *meraglim* and their sin, with the *parsha* of *tzitzis* at the very end of the *parsha*. When *Moshe Rabbeinu* sent off the spies and told them to scout out the land, he used the term, ׀ֹאֵלָא ׀ֵאֵלָא ׀ֵאֵלָא ׀ֵאֵלָא "אֵלָא אֵל - "And you shall see the land what it is." Later on, by the *mitzva* of *tzitzis* we find a similar language being employed: " ׀ֵאֵלָא ׀ֵאֵלָא ׀ֵאֵלָא ׀ֵאֵלָא " - "And you shall see it and you shall remember." What is the significance of this similarity?

**R' Yissocher Frand Shlit" a** draws a clear connection from the words of *Chazal* in the *gemara* (:â ûáçðî). We are taught that "seeing" the threads of the *tzitzis* leads us to recall the commandments that *Hashem* has given us. The key is the blue thread known as *ûlëú*, which is reminiscent of the deep blue sea. Subsequently, the sea recalls the blue sky and the sky reminds us of the *ãääää ãñë - Throne of Glory*. By constantly placing our thoughts with the concept of the Heavenly throne, we are similarly reminded to always perform the *mitzvos* and learn *Torah*.

Thus, the *tzitzis* shows that a person can truly "see" far beyond the surface if he makes a concerted and proper effort. This was the message that Moshe was attempting to impart to the *meraglim* before he sent them off to scout the Land of Israel, and indeed, there was much good to see. However, their basic lack of faith and vision could not get them beyond a surface and superficial view. In their eyes what they saw were giants, funerals and an unconquerable land, because they never truly penetrated to its holiness. They never did "see" the land.

āī ōōā īāōāū - "ēēōāāē ēūīī ſ' ā ōīāēā" ū"āā  
 ēōīāī ūōōōī ēīīāī ōūōā ēā ēē ēī ōāū īōīā, īīī  
 'ā āāāē īāāūō - "'ā āāāē āīīēā" ōāōō ēōā āūōī ē  
 īē ēē" ēāē īō āēāē āā īēā .āōāīāā īīōōī ēā  
 ēūēūō ōūā ēūūā ūāā ēāāāē ūā īēāāōā īēūōā  
 īā āīē ēūīāā", īāōūē ōōā ūā āāōē āī īā - "īēōōī  
 īīāōū ſ' ā ī ū ūāāē- āāā āēāēā - "īāō īā ōūāāēā āōōī  
 .āāāō āīī 'ā āāāō īē

[illegible]

**מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים**

(ái-âé) 'ǎěǎ øîàì ìàøùè éóá ìà äúǎǎ ǎøú øùà õøǎǎ úǎǎ ǎǎéöǎǎ

During the latter years of the nineteenth century and early into the beginning of the twentieth century, Czarist Russia was an increasingly difficult and treacherous place for a Jew to live and raise a *Torah*-true family. The decrees of the Cantonists were in full swing and Jewish children were mercilessly snatched, coerced, bribed and whisked away from their loving families and forced to serve in the "glorious" army of the Czar, protecting the homeland and in many cases dying at the whim of Russian generals who thought nothing of placing these young charges in harm's way while they insulated themselves, never experiencing any danger to themselves.

In the city of Kovna, the *Rov* and renowned *posek hador*, **R' Yitzchok Elchanan Spektor ZT"l** spent countless hours seeing to the needs of these unfortunate Jewish soldiers, and he worked tirelessly with whatever means available to him to ease their load and hopefully secure their release. It was widely known that the great *Rov* had extensive influence with certain authorities and his advice and efforts were sought by many despondent families who had lost their sons to this terrible decree.

There was one boy, Moshe, who R' Yitzchok Elchanan worked exceedingly hard to have freed. Any and every available avenue was pursued and eventually, to the surprise of many, Moshe was indeed let go from the army. On that momentous day, R' Yitzchok Elchanan was sitting at his usual seat at the head of the Rabbinical Court in Kovna, deciding innumerable questions of *halachah* that were posed and sent from all over the *אורח חיים* - world of Torah (scholarship). Sitting at his side, was the *Rov* of Mir and fellow *dayan*, **R' Eliyohu Boruch Kamai ZT"l**. Just then, a man entered the *Beis Din* and breathlessly announced to the *Rabbonim*, "Moshe was freed from the army!"

This was a joyous occasion and R' Yitzchok Elchanan immediately called out, "Thank you so much for your good tidings. You have made me so happy. I bless you, the bearer of good news, with countless blessings and good tidings." It felt as if a tremendous burden had been lifted off the *Kovner Rov* and he truly expressed his sincere appreciation to the fortunate young man who had brought the good news.

Not more than a few minutes later, a knock was heard and another man entered. "*Rebbe*, Moshe was freed!" he exclaimed. R' Yitzchok Elchanan looked up from his place and in a voice full of happiness, he declared, "Thank you so much for your good tidings. You have made me so happy. I bless you, the bearer of good news, with countless blessings and good tidings." Soon after, a third person came in and then a fourth, fifth and sixth. Each one had rushed to be the first to inform the *Rov* of the good news. And to each and every one, R' Yitzchok Elchanan answered him as if hearing the news for the very first time;