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RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

PARSHAS SHELACH

GREAT FROM OPPOSITION

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PARSHAS SHELACH

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

GREAT FROM OPPOSITION

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Part I. Opposed by Many

Ten and Two

Everybody remembers how, when the twelve *meraglim* came back to Moshe Rabbeinu from spying out Eretz Canaan, Yehoshua and Kalev opposed their compatriots. The other ten, the majority, had made a decision that it would be irresponsible to enter Canaan now. They understood of course that eventually Hakadosh Baruch Hu would give them the land; but to come now and make a frontal attack on a country that was fortified with cities bristling with armaments, with big walls and a powerful populace, would be suicide.

Yehoshua and Kaleiv had other ideas, however. They were of the bent of mind that it wasn't up to the *meraglim* to give advice. "We were sent to report on what we see and leave it up to Moshe Rabbeinu to decide, *al pi Hashem*, how to proceed. But to give our two cents, that's not our job."

Now, you have to know that at that time Yehoshua was relatively young. And Kaleiv too; he was also a relatively young man compared to the others. He was only about forty years old at that time; forty, forty-five. The others however, the rest of the *meraglim*, were elderly people. And they were very respected people: בָּלָם אֲנָשִׁים רָאשֵׁי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָמָּה – *They were all distinguished men; heads of the children of Yisroel* (Bamidbar 13:3). And more than anything else, they were the majority. Yehoshua and Kaleiv were outnumbered.

Arguing for Life

You can be sure on the way back they were arguing and they were scolding Yehoshua and Kaleiv: “Where do you get your boldness? You’re only a minority. You’re two against ten and we have decided to give a negative report and to warn the people against the dangers. Don’t you see how powerful the people of the land are, how fortified are the cities? How can you have the audacity, just two people, to oppose a majority who have ten?”

And they offered good arguments. “Don’t you care about the people? You want to take the nation into a trap? It’s a suicide mission!”

So you’ll say – now that you know already the end of the story so it’s easy to say – “Oh, but what about *bitachon*? What about trusting in Hashem?”

The Suicide Mission

It’s like telling a man that he should jump off a roof ten stories high and trust in Hashem; that’s how it was to conquer Canaan. The Canaanites had armies. One of the kings, the King of Chatzer, had six hundred chariots, iron chariots. We on the other hand had nothing, no chariots. They would plow into us. They would kill us.

And so when the *meraglim* came back and they all spoke to the people and said that it’s not worthwhile now to attempt to battle their way into Eretz Canaan, that’s what the people accepted. Most of the people – it doesn’t mean all – most of the people were impressed by their arguments. After all, majority rules. If you have a *beis din*, you follow the majority.

The Tough Two

Now Yehoshua and Kaleiv – don’t think it was so easy. Yehoshua and Kaleiv did not find it easy to oppose them. It was very embarrassing, very uncomfortable, for them. You can be sure that if we were there, even if we had thought like Yehoshua and Kaleiv, we would have folded quite quickly. Even if we thought we were right, but the strength of the majority, the desire to weaken before the *rabim*, is not easy to overcome.

And yet these two men, individuals, spoke up against the rest and they battled for what they thought was the right approach. They remained strong against the majority, their detractors, and maintained their allegiance to what they knew was the *ratzon Hashem*.

Extra Credit

Now what was the verdict of Hashem? **וַיָּמָתוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים ... בַּמַּגֵּפָה לְפָנֵי ה'** – *Those ten died in a plague before Hashem*, **וְיֵהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון וְכָלֵב בֶּן יִפְנֶה חִיּוּ מִן הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵם**, **וְהַלְכִים לְתוֹר אֶת הָאָרֶץ** – *and Yehoshua and Kaleiv lived from among those men who spied out the land* (ibid. 14:38). It means that the spies who spoke against going into Eretz Canaan perished there in the Wilderness, while Yehoshua and Kaleiv remained alive.

But that's not all. It's true that they were the only ones who remained alive and came into Eretz Canaan, but the Gemara in Bava Basra (118b) says it means more than that. What does it mean that they 'lived from' the others? So the Sages say **שְׁחִיזוּ בְּחֵלְקָם** – *they lived in the portion of others*. 'They lived from those who spied out the land' means that all the land that the *meraglim* would have gotten had they come into Eretz Canaan, Yehoshua and Kaleiv received in their stead.

Benefitting From Others

So you'll ask, why did they get a bigger share? It's enough that they get their share. Why should they get the share of the others who didn't deserve their share? The others should lose their share, that's all. Why should Yehoshua and Kaleiv receive more than they deserve?

So you'll say it was a *knas*, a punishment. Because the ten spoke against the land, they were punished by losing their shares; and in order to emphasize the sin, it makes sense that those who spoke for the land should get it instead.

It's not that simple however – there's a much bigger principle here. Because actually the extra reward was a measure of the test that they survived! Yehoshua and Kaleiv had a stronger test just because of the opposition – ten against two made it much more difficult to stick to their principles. Each one of the ten was another thorn in the side and it was difficult to stand against all those other personalities.

Extra Work, Extra Credit

Why is that? Because it's natural that a person wants to be good with people, not to fight against people and stand on one side against others. It's easier to yield to the majority than to be an outcast. And so it's not just a matter of battling against others, of fighting for what's right – you're battling against *yourself*, against your desire to conform even when you know you're in the right.

And yet, Yehoshua and Kaleiv maintained their clarity of vision and their loyalty to the purpose for which they were sent, and they persisted against the opposition. And just because the opposition was so great – not three, not four or five or six; it was ten! – that's why their reward was greater. They took

the *chelek* of their detractors because it was their detractors who made it much harder.

Appreciate the Opposition

That's included in the principle we learn in Pirkei Avos, a *mishna*, לְפִנּוּם צַעֲרָא אֲגָרָא – that the reward is always according to the difficulty (5:23). The more difficult it is to do a certain thing, the greater is the reward. And therefore when an individual chooses the right thing against opposition, and his opposition is big, so the *tzaar*, the difficulty of opposing them is so much bigger; and so 'according to his difficulties so too will be his reward'.

Let's say a boy grows up in a family where his older brothers and sisters ridicule him. They say 'you're *frum*, you're a fanatic' and they laugh at him and they discourage him. And when he puts on *tefillin* they make faces at him.

But it's not only his siblings. Sometimes even his father says, "If you're such a *frum* boy, why don't you also do this or that?" They always use his *frumkeit* as leverage to blame him. "Why do you get angry if you're a *frum* boy?" All kinds of accusations.

Ignore the Red Herring

Here's a favorite you hear always: "Why don't you do more chores in the house? Why don't you help out more in the house? You're so busy with the Gemara! Doesn't the Torah tell you about helping, about being a *mentch*?"

Now, I'm all for children helping in the house. I think that they should be put to work, much more than they do today. Every child should wash his own dishes. You finish breakfast, wash your own plate; wash your own knife and spoon. Take down the garbage. Other things too. Of course children must have chores in the house. But I'm talking about when it's an accusation used as a canard, the red herring of why don't the *frummeh* do this or that.

What's Bothering You?

I'll tell you a story. Years ago, I was speaking to a group about the importance of supporting the yeshivahs, the *kollelim*.

So one gentleman said, "Why are there so many yeshivah men? They should be out on the streets doing kindness, not sitting on the benches in the *beis medrash*. There are needy people, people who need your help; how can you sit and learn?"

So I said to him, "Look outside, look out the window on Ocean Parkway. You see men sitting on the benches playing chess. All day long sitting and doing nothing. Now, did you ever tell them that they shouldn't be sitting on benches on Ocean Parkway, that they should be out on the streets doing *chessed*, helping people?"

No, it never even crossed your mind. It's only when you see the yeshivah man sitting and learning, that's when you remember all the kindness that must be done.

So it's not the sitting on the benches that is bothering you; it's the sitting on the benches in the *beis medrash*.

Beloved From Opposition

But go tell that to this boy's father or to his siblings. They harass him always and it's not easy to weather the storm. But this boy does it. A lot of boys have done it. We have in the yeshivahs many who became great by means of their opposition. And they are the ones who are the most beloved.

That's one of the lessons of Yehoshua and Kaleiv: **וְהָיָה כִּן הָאֲנָשִׁים** – *They gained more life, more reward because of those who made it difficult for them.* But not in just a happenstance way or a punishment. It's because opposition makes a person that much greater. A person's character is sharpened by means of that struggle; and therefore the reward that his detractors lost out on is acquired by the one who became greater just because of those detractors.

Part II. Opposed by All

The Model to Follow

Now, the strength of character that it takes to oppose a majority doesn't come out of thin air – it requires a model, someone to emulate. And these great men, Yehoshua and Kaleiv, had an especially good model to follow, someone from their not so ancient history – only a few hundred years before them – whose life they studied. I suspect that it was a model they thought about and spoke about often.

Who was that? It was the father of our nation, Avraham. But they weren't emulating him only as Avraham Avinu; they were emulating Avraham Ha'Ivri. Now, I'll take a minute or two to explain that.

There's one place in the Torah where Avraham is called Avraham the *Ivri* (Bereishis 14:13) and our Sages are puzzled by that because we never call our heroes *Ivri*. Reformers call themselves Hebrews because they don't know what the word means but if you're familiar with Tanach, you'll see Jews don't call themselves *Ivri*. Gentiles, yes, they call Jews *Ivrim*, Hebrews. A Jew who's conversing with a goy, that too; he'll call himself an *Ivri* because that's how the gentiles like to think of us. '*Ivri*' is a generic name which means 'those who originate from *ever hanahar*, the other side of the Euphrates River.' In the eyes of the nations of the world the Jew was just one of the many tribes that originated from the other side of the Euphrates.

And who came from the other side of the river? Non-aristocrats, nomads, drifters. It was a part of the world where cities weren't considered the norm of civilization; it was primarily shepherd nations who moved around following the pastures so that the livestock could graze. And so to the gentile, the word *Ivri* meant the lower class, the nomadic people. Like they say in America, the people who live 'on the other side of the tracks'.

A Misplaced Moniker

And so the question arises therefore, because the Torah is not a gentile book. And so why does the *Torah* call Avraham "the Hebrew"?

And the answer the Sages (Bereishis Rabbah 32:8) give is as follows: It's true that to the people living in Canaan Avraham was an *Ivri* because 'he came from the other side' but the Torah has a better reason for that moniker. The Torah calls him an *Ivri* because Avraham was an *Ivri* even before he came to Eretz Canaan. Even when he was still on that side of the Euphrates he was already 'a man from the other side'.

The other side? Of what?

The other side of the whole world! שְׁכַל הָעוֹלָם בְּלוּ מַעֲבַר אֶחָד - *The whole world was on one side, אֶחָד וְאַבְרָהָם מַעֲבַר אֶחָד - and just one little boy, Avraham, was on the other side (ibid.)*

A Lost Little Boy

Everybody worshiped idols – that is, everybody who Avraham knew. In Eretz Canaan there was a small group of *maaminim*, descended from Shem and Ever, who were active in their town of Shaleim but Avrohom didn't know anything about them. He was in Ur Kasdim all alone, one little boy among the idolaters.

You know the archeologists have spent a lot of time investigating Ur Kasdim – the ruins are in Mesopotamia near the Persian Gulf – and they discovered that it was a town dedicated to the worship of the moon goddess *avodah zarah*. In that town everybody was saturated with the teachings of idolatry. The mothers and fathers worshiped idols and little children were taught that way from the cradle.

And so even among his family Avraham was on the other side, an outcast. Everyone knows the story but I'll say it anyway; how Avraham's father, Terach, made a business of selling idols and sometimes the father asked him to stay in the store for a few minutes. And so Avraham was standing in the store behind the counter and somebody came in and wanted to buy, let's say, an idol that's good for having children, a special idol for fertility.

Now Avraham found it very difficult to spoil his father's *parnassah*. It was the family's way of life and it was their living too but Avraham had other ideas.

One System, One Creator

As a little boy he began to question the idols. He began to point out the oneness in the universe, how everything cooperates. Don't you see how the sun sends down its energy and how the sun draws up the moisture from the seas and it becomes clouds and how the winds convey the clouds and then the force of gravity brings down the water?

So how did this system happen, that all these things work together in cooperation? The sun is ninety-three million miles away from here and still the sun is causing the water to rise from the surface of the ocean and the winds blow all across the surface of the earth and they carry the clouds inland and the clouds drop the water.

And then when it falls we have machines on earth called seeds that can take this water and change it into grass. Water changes into grass. And then we have cows and sheep that change the grass into leather and wool. And that's why we have not only wool and leather, that's why we have food to eat. It all comes because of this system.

So Avraham Avinu saw that there was planning here. Tremendous planning, incredible design. And he saw such things everywhere around him. He looked and he studied and he thought and he saw everything cooperating in the world. And he said therefore that it has to be that everything has One Supervisor Who conducts all of its affairs; and finally he came to the principle *Hashem Echad!* And that meant that the gods that were worshiped by his contemporaries, the whole thing was a fraud; they were being sold a false bill of goods.

Child Abuse in Mesopotamia

And so when this man asked for an idol Avraham said, "Listen to me Jack. You're better off by going home and praying to the Hashem Elokei HaShomayim."

"Who's that?" he said.

So Avraham began to explain. In the meantime his father came in and saw what was doing, "What are you doing here?!" he yelled at his son. "You're driving away my customers?! Are you out of your mind?!" And he gave him a *frask* (slap).

Oh, that *frask* was an achievement! Because it meant that Avraham was being opposed. Aha! The greatness of opposition. Not that the opposition is great but it can make *you* great!

Child Abuse in America

I knew a boy who told me that he was learning Gemara in his house and his mother came in and smacked him for learning so much. She was an American mother and she didn't want him wasting his time with that 'nonsense'.

We were walking together and he was telling me the story. He was discouraged. I said to him, “Do you want to sell me that smack? How much do you want for it?”

He thought it over and decided he wouldn't sell it. And he was smart because he was becoming great because of that opposition.

A Difficult Test

And that's what happened with Avraham. We have to realize that Avraham had a big battle on his hands. He was ridiculed; he was always fighting the battle of the mind, of the emotions. Don't think it was easy. Even if you're a smart boy, you're an *iluy*, you're a prodigy, it's very difficult for anybody to oppose the environment.

Let's say you'll go today onto a university campus and you'll stand and start preaching about *Hashem Echad*. You'll be shouted down by people who can speak perfect English – the ‘intellectuals’ – and they'll say that you're out of style, you're old fashioned.

“He's talking about things that are just as dead as the flat-earth theory.” They'll laugh at you and ridicule you. “There's nothing to it! All the scientific world accepts evolution without exception.”

And so just because you know that you're right doesn't mean it's easy. It's quite uncomfortable.

The Meshuga Majority

It's like walking into an insane asylum. I had that once. I once had to visit a yeshivah man who was in an asylum. He was sick and I wanted to visit him. I was there after visiting hours and so they gave me a big black security man to walk with me. And all of the inmates were pointing at me and laughing at my beard. In those days nobody had a beard so they were laughing at me. Don't think it didn't bother me. For a moment I felt discouraged. But then I said to myself that *they* were the *meshugaim*, that I was the sane one. But it's not easy. It's uncomfortable.

And Avraham Avinu didn't have only three hundred *meshugaim*. He had thousands of people, his compatriots, who were shouting him down. Wherever he went they pointed at him and said, “There goes the lunatic. Terach has a crazy boy in his house.”

Great Character, Great Reward

He had nobody on his side. **וְשָׂכַל הָעוֹלָם מֵעֶבֶר מִזֶּה וְאֲבָרְהָם מֵעֶבֶר מִזֶּה**! He was all alone, one boy against the world! And that was the highlight of Avraham's history because it was the greatest opportunity for him. To remain strong in the face of opposition is what separates the men from the boys; it's what makes your character great.

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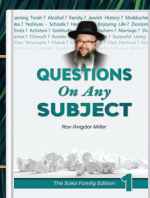
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Because Avraham didn't bend – despite the smacks and despite the laughter and ridicule he persisted; he didn't weaken in his righteousness – he became better and better because of that. That's the principle here! The more opponents you have, the greater you can become.

And the greater your reward will be. עַד שֶׁבָּא אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ וְקִבֵּל עָלָיו שְׂכָר בְּלֵם – *Because he persisted, Avraham took the reward of his whole generation* (Avos 5:2). All of the *nitzchiyus*, all the *Olam Haba* that his generation could have gotten had they been virtuous, Avraham took away because he stayed strong *despite them*. They are the ones who caused his *Olam Haba* to be greater because it was their opposition that made him great.

And that's a quality of character that Yehoshua and Kaleiv learned from the father of our nation. That when you remain virtuous in the face of a majority, you become so virtuous because of that, that you take away even the reward that the others could have received. Not only in this world, not only a share in *Eretz Canaan*; that's nothing yet. Your share forever and ever is increased by your strength of character in the face of an opposing majority.

Part III. Oppose Them All

Path to Success

Now we have to know that this practice of Avraham, of not kowtowing to the majority, became one of the calling cards of our nation. Avraham Halvri, by standing by his principles even when it meant to be on the other side, taught us that for every Jew, in one way or another, that's his path to true success.

But not only against the ideals and attitudes and opposition of the world. That's important but it's only a small part of it; because even among ourselves, among the *frummeh*, in order to excel, a person has to stand up to opposition. It's true, if you want to be a Jew, a simple Jew, who doesn't achieve much in life so as long as you do what everyone else does – you're *frum*, you're *shomer Torah u'mitzvos* – so after 120 years you'll be rewarded in *Olam Haba*; absolutely. But that doesn't mean you accomplished all that you can in this world.

Being a Loner

To accomplish, to excel, means you have to be a *yachid*. If you're going to accomplish big things you have to know that sometimes you'll be standing alone. Sometimes it will be like by Yehoshua and Kaleiv, ten against two, and sometimes it might be like Avraham Halvri – it might feel like it's the whole world on one side and you're standing on the other. But whatever it is, that's one of the principles of excelling in the Eyes of Hashem.

Now, what was the *derech* of Avraham that made him a *yachid*? What was the area that he excelled in against the world?

Avraham instituted the science that we call *bechinah*, the practice of recognizing Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the world. From an early age he saw that the world is not silent; that it's speaking and it's saying with a very loud voice, "Look at me and you can discover the Creator in every natural object in the universe."

But not just a one-time thing, to discover the Creator. It's a lifetime project! Avraham reasoned as follows: "If there are so many testimonies in Creation that are speaking of a Creator it means the Creator wants me to study them. Not only to see Him once and to discover that the world is wrong; no, there's a much bigger purpose than that. The purpose is to see the Creator always."

Studying the Orange

That's why he didn't stop when he discovered Hashem. בְּן ג' שָׁנִים הִכִּיר אֶת בּוֹרְאוֹ – *At the age of three he recognized the Creator.* As a child, he said, "Why is it that the orange is yellow on the outside of the skin but the underside of the skin has no color; is it an accident?"

That's enough to overthrow all the universities and textbooks. Why shouldn't it be colored on the underside and the outside should be plain? Think about that. I told you once already the answer but you should spend time thinking about it on your own.

Because that's what Avraham did. Every time he ate an orange he was thinking about the Creator of the orange, about the *chochmah* in the peel and in the sections and in the small pockets of juice.

Thirty–Seven Years of Oranges

And when he came to the pits he was thinking, "Why is it that the pit of the orange is bitter? The whole orange is sweet and tart and just right, and here the pits are bitter. It must be that the purpose of making the pits bitter is so that you shouldn't eat it. You should spit it out for a tree to grow from that seed.

So every time Avraham ate an orange – when he was three and four and five and so on – he thought about that and became more and more aware of the Creator.

Because there's another *maamar*: בֶּן אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנִים הִכִּיר אֶת בּוֹרְאוֹ – *When he was forty he recognized the Creator.* Forty? Another source says forty-eight. Forty-eight? But if he was *ben gimmel* when he found the truth, so what's with forty?

A Lifetime of Work

The answer is he never stopped becoming more aware of Hashem. Not only in his youth, a *chiddush* that he discovered and then he put it away and got down to the business of life, of *avodas Hashem*. No. This was his business of *avodas Hashem*. Every day he continued to review it. The same lessons, new lessons; Avraham made it his 'life program' to see Hashem in nature more and more, to believe in Hashem more and more every day.

Avraham Avinu wherever he looked, he saw purposefulness; he saw design. Tremendous design! Cunning design! Profound design! And he never stopped looking because it brought him closer and closer to Hashem. By seeing the handiwork of Hashem, it was almost like he saw Hashem's hand in the world.

Now I'm not limiting Avraham's greatness to one thing. Avrohom was very great and for me to speak about him, it's like a little ant looking up at a mountain and describing what he sees on top. But there's no question – we know this from all of the sources – that this was the *derech hachaim* that Avraham walked and that's how he came to all the *shleimus*.

The Ridicule Continues

Now in those days it was a revolution and Avraham had to oppose the majority, but even today it's not so simple. It's the same thing today.

Suppose a man, an Orthodox man, wants to emulate our father Avraham. He wants to spend his life seeing Hashem in Creation. I'm sorry to say that you might be alone. It's not easy; even a *rosh yeshivah*, a *talmid chochom*, might not think it's important.

I once had an *adam gadol* in my house for a Shabbos morning. So I took out my old merchandise and I was talking about an apple. Old customers here know about the apple.

He looked at me 'politely'. He never heard these things; he never encountered it. He had never looked in the *Chovos Halevavos*, *Sha'ar Habechinah*. I'm sure he looked in *Mesillas Yesharim*. I'm sure he looked in the *Shaarei Teshuva*. Maybe he looked in *Chovos Halevavos* too but not the *Sha'ar Habechinah*.

It's Not So Pashut

Most *frum* people today have the idea that it's all superfluous. They wish to fall back solely on the principle of *emunah peshutah*, "All you need is *emunah peshutah*," they say. It means just say 'I believe' and it's not necessary to be convinced any more than that.

But the *Chovos Halevavos* says that it's a mistake. *Emunah peshutah* is very beautiful; but it's not enough. And so we say to this *frum* Jew who has

emunah peshutah, 'Nothing doing! You better go and get a little more *emunah* than *peshutah*.'

And so, because most people will say it's unimportant you have to be vigilant not to be weakened by the attitudes of the majority. Even in the yeshivah, the *kollel*, you should not allow yourself to be held down to the general attitudes. Of course, whatever you need to associate with them, to discuss *sugyas*, to learn *bechavrusa*, certainly you should utilize them. But over and above, when you need more things that they can understand, you must live your own life. Because there's very much more to accomplish above the level of the people in the yeshivah or in the *kollel*. A real *mevakeish* will go beyond the majority around him.

Alone in the Kitchen

A woman who wants to be great will go beyond her neighbors. She's in the kitchen browning some sweet potatoes for her family and she's thinking, "How is it possible that these potatoes will turn into children?!" It's actually so! When her children eat those potatoes, they miraculously are transformed into material for the body. Yes, when you see a girl with nice long hair, that's from the potatoes her mother prepared for her.

So this lady in the kitchen, she's not bothered that nobody else thinks about these things, that the lady in the next apartment thinks it's nothing at all. She's thinking, "How do these potatoes arrive at the scalp? Through the bloodstream. A miracle! The bloodstream after all has 'only about a thousand' different materials traveling together in it; and they are all traveling together and they don't contaminate each other. They don't interfere with each other.

And when the blood arrives at the right destination, it leaves a package exactly what is needed in that place. When it gets to the scalp it leaves a little bit of oil for the roots of the hair in the scalp; a special chemical that the blood brought from the potato. And it brings keratin, a load with keratin. UPS rings the bell, "A package of keratin for this little place here, this little hair cell."

And it starts coming out a long hair; whether it is black or blond, it makes no difference. "How can it be?" she's thinking. "How can potatoes turn into hair?! Ohhh, because Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the Great Chemist; He knows how to do that."

Alone on the Street

Imagine now, here's a boy walking down the street in Flatbush and he's blinking his eyes and he's thinking that every time he blinks, he's giving his eyes a bath. It's like a windshield wiper and he's washing his eyes with a certain solution that contains a powerful disinfectant, an antiseptic.

Every time you blink your eyes, you're washing your eyes. Try it. Beautiful windshield wipers! In a flash, you've cleaned your eyes. And this little boy is

thinking about that, about the muscles involved in pulling down your eyelids and pulling it back. He's thinking about the Creator of such an exquisite contraption, such a spectacular invention. He's walking down Ocean Parkway, one man among many.

The Reward of the Loner

But go and tell someone that's what you're thinking about. Will people understand that? If you go back to the *yeshivos* and tell them these things they will say, "Well, it is not so important. It's old-time *mussar*; it's out of style today."

And therefore, like Avraham, you're battling against the majority. Even the good ones, they live by traditions. But you want more than that – you're going to study the world in your own pioneering manner, and refuse to be hampered by the attitudes of the society around you.

And that will be your greatness forever and ever. It's so great that **זְכָה נוֹטֵל עִדּוֹן** – *the tzaddik gets not only his share but the share of all those whose own weaknesses made his own avodas Hashem more difficult.* Like Avraham HaIvri and like Yehoshua v'Kaleiv he'll find more and more life, more and more reward, just because he remained strong against the majority.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

5 Minutes of Bechinah

In our *sedrah*, Yehoshua and Kaleiv earned the reward of those who opposed them by standing firm against the majority. In doing so, they followed the example of our forefather Avraham, who stood against the entire world to proclaim his faith in Hakadosh Baruch Hu and received the reward of his entire generation. Even among the *frum*, those who dedicate their lives to studying Emunah and Bechinah may encounter opposition. This week, I plan *bli neder* to dedicate 5 minutes each day to studying Shaar Habechinah, following Rav Miller's teachings.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

340 – Chanukah VI | **699** – Overcoming the Barriers | **760** – Ways of Avraham
E-63 – Strength of Character | **E-254** – The Man That Changed the World

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QUESTION

Here is a question. This lady states that her family has advanced to the stage of not owning a radio and newspapers, ah ha ha! תבוא עליכם ברכה! Yet we feel emotionally distant from Hashem. What can we do to improve these feelings and get closer on a more permanent basis?

ANSWER

Well I must tell you that in this world it *won't be a permanent basis*. In This World the yearning will continue. And one of the purposes of the yearning is to make us aware that this is not our final resting place. In order to give us an intimation of a World-to-Come.

But if you want to be closer to Hashem on a permanent basis I'll have to tell you a little bit of what I omitted today and that is to *come as close to the chachmei haTorah as possible*. If you're a Lubavitcher chassid be as close to the Rebbe as you possibly can be. Move in next door. If you can buy the house for a big price it's worth it. If you're not, if you're a yeshivah man, move in next door to Mirrer Yeshivah and stay there. Stay there! Get as close to the *chachmei haTorah* as you can. If necessary ask him to let you shine his shoes in order to be close to him. Get as close as you can because that's what the Rambam brings *l'halachah*. ובו תרבה, *you want to stick to Hashem? הרבה בהכמים ובתלמידיהם, stick to the chachamim and their talmidim.*

Now this deserves a lot of talk but that's brief in a nutshell. You want to get close? You're a girl? Then sell everything you have and buy yourself a *talmid chacham*. Or have your father buy for you a *talmid chacham*. It's worth selling, וישא בת תלמיד, *a man should sell everything he owns, לעולם ימכר אדם כל מה שיש לו, חכם, and buy yourself a daughter of a talmid chacham.* You can't get one here? Go to Yerushalayim. The prices are less. Only there they won't take you. Go to Yerushalayim. Big *talmidei chachamim*. You have ten daughters. And offer him a big sum of money for one of the daughters.

Now how that brings a person to Hakadosh Baruch Hu I cannot explain now because the time is too short.

TAPE #51

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As a zechus for our children for beracha, parnassah, and zivugim