

READ IT  
UP 



THE LEARN IT UP NEWSLETTER

Read it Up

## Humility vs. Self-Confidence

By Matt Livi

In this week's *parasha* we have the infamous story of the *meraglim* (spies). What they did wrong isn't so simple to understand. According to the Chafetz Chaim, their sin was that they didn't think they were worthy of entering Israel. Now, most people would read that and think, "Well they were just being humble." But they weren't acting very humble, they were acting without self-confidence.

There is a very big difference between the two traits. Humility (probably the greatest trait to have) is when a person is successful in something and he understands that it is Hashem's doing, not his own. Self-confidence is having the belief that Hashem blessed you with an amazing body, capable of doing anything effort is put into. The two traits are not contradictory. Ideally, one should always be confident that with Hashem's help you could do anything as long as you realize where it's coming from.

So what did the *meraglim* do? They said that we don't have the merit to go into Israel and therefore they didn't even pray to Hashem for help. I don't know about you guys but I'm definitely not worthy of Hashem answering my prayers, yet He does it anyways. Why? Because Hashem responds with mercy when one prays to Him. So the *meraglim* had so little self-confidence they thought: "Why pray? Hashem won't answer us anyways."

From this we learn the importance of self-esteem, and the detrimental effects a lack of it

could have on a person. We should always feel confident in our abilities, while bearing in mind that the source of our success is not solely our abilities and efforts, but largely coming as a result of God's grace towards us. Remembering this can bring a person a long way, and help him avoid the pitfall of negating his own potential while believing that doing so is an act of humility.

Our Sages realized this when they said "*Me'od, me'od heve shefal ruach*—Be very, very humble" (Avot 4:4). They did not mean to say that an individual should depreciate himself of all worth, and *literally* think of himself as a nothing. That cannot be the case, because these same Rabbis are the ones who teach us to value every human being, and to never harm another fellow; each and every one of us has an inherent value. Therefore, they must have meant what we mentioned before: realizing, although we have many capabilities and talents, that they all come from Him, and that without His constant assistance, we would literally be nothing.

May we always strive to see the inherent value in others, yet always keep in mind that our success all goes back to Him.

Shabbat shalom everybody, see you soon!



# Parasha Trivia!

- 1) What major sin is committed by the Jews in this week's *parasha*?
  - a) The sin of the spies. A group of men who were sent to spy out Israel returned saying negative things about the Land.
  - b) On the way to Israel, they stopped at McDonald's drive-thru and picked up some Big Macs.
  - c) They heard thunder and didn't make the appropriate *beracha*.
  - d) They leaned to the right on Pesach instead of the left.

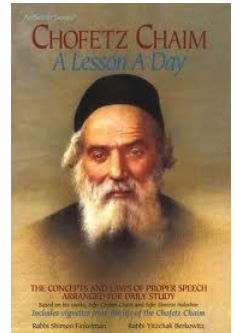


- 2) What in particular made this sin so shocking?
  - a) They also said *lashon hara* (negative speech/gossip) about the Chafetz Chaim, in front of the Chafetz Chaim.
  - b) The spies are described as "*anashim rashei benei yisrael*-Men, leaders of the

Jews." It was shocking that the leaders of the people would do such a lowly thing, despite their high stature.

- c) After the spies came back from Israel, they were all wearing black hats and had long *peyot*. It was shocking to see such religious men do such a grave sin.

- 3) At the end of the *parasha*, in the *maftir*, appears the paragraph of *tzitzit* (which we say every day in *Shema*!). According to the text, what is the purpose of the *tzitzit*?
  - a) To be used as a whip.
  - b) To drive away the demons.
  - c) So that we should see them, and remember the *mitzvot* of Hashem!
  - d) To give people *tzitzit* burns.



## Spotlight on a Mitzvah

### Tzitzit & Tekhelet

We all read today in this week's *parasha* the *pasuk*, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them to make for them fringes (=tzitzit), throughout their generations fringes shall be on the corners of their garments, and that they put on the fringe of each corner a thread of blue (=tekhlet)" (*Bamidbar* 15:38).

A famous Jewish riddle is told over when this verse is read or learnt. What is the only non-kosher animal specifically used for the purpose of a *mitzvah*? Rambam writes (*Hil. Tzitzit* 2), that the oral tradition mandates that the *tekhelet* come from a snail, named the *chilazon*, a non-kosher animal of course! The *chilazon* is found in the deep waters of the Mediterranean coast, and generally never come ashore.

According to many rabbis, this snail can

be identified as the *Murex Trunculus*; a snail used to produce a deep blue color that fits most of the descriptions of the *chilazon* outlined by the Sages.

Once captured and cut open, a gland under its shell produces a black dye, which is then mixed with various spices, and left in the sun. After this process, it turns into a beautiful, steadfast, turquoise blue. It serves as a reminder to us to look up into the blue sky, and the sky, will remind us of Hashem, His glory, and that we are His children and chosen people.



Shabbat Shalom!

Questions? Comments? Ideas? Email us at [MYCRiU@gmail.com](mailto:MYCRiU@gmail.com)



כ"ג סיון תשע"ג • June 1, 2013

**Editors & Contributors:** Daniel Livi, Nathan Zaboulani, Oren Heskia, Shawn Aziz, Yosef Zarnighian