

THE MORE, THE HOLIER

By Ozer Bergman

"How long will this evil congregation persist, complaining about Me?" (Numbers 14:27).

The following may only be performed in the presence of ten men: the repetition of the introduction to the Shema; praying as a minyan; the Blessing of the Kohanim; reading the Torah; reading the Haftarah; ... the blessing of the bridegroom; invoking God's Name in the invitation to say the Grace after Meals. How do we know that at least ten are required? From the verse "How long will this evil congregation persist?" Without Yehoshua and Kalev, they were ten (*Megillah* 23b; see Rashi).

Every year it strikes me as being curious and ironic. From two of the most anti-communal episodes in the Torah—this week's mutiny of the spies and next week's rebellion of Korach and his congregation—we Jews learn the *halakhah* that to perform a public *davar she-be-kedushah* (sacred function/service) a minyan (quorum of ten adult Jewish men*) is required. Some might say it's Divine humor. (God does laugh; see Psalms 2:4). It certainly can be seen as Divine compassion—their very mistake, misusing the power of community to strip and distance the Jewish people from glorifying God, is transformed into being the necessary forum for sanctifying God's Name.

Reb Noson writes about the power of community and the importance of being actively involved in any mitzvah Jewish people are performing. This is important in and of itself. It is doubly important to note this in regard to an overall Breslov outlook. Why? Since Breslov literature greatly emphasizes the individual's connection with the tzaddik, and the individual's *hitbodedut* (private prayer), one who doesn't actually have the good mazel to live in proximity to other Breslovers (or other Jews, for that matter) may think that community is a nice extra, but not of primary importance. Think again. We have this, à la Reb Noson:

God's way and the human way aren't always parallel. The more people move into a neighborhood, the more congested it gets. The more people enter a room, the more

crowded it gets. Space becomes tighter and tighter. But in *kedushah*, when another person joins the minyan, the prayer grows dynamically. Just as *Sefer Yetzirah* teaches that five "stones" (letters) build 120 "houses" (words) and six build 720, Rebbe Nachman teaches that each person who joins a minyan, or any mitzvah, increases the power of the minyan and the mitzvah.

And not only the power, but the extent as well. Because not only are there many, many more words when a letter is added, but each word is longer. Similarly, when you join in community to do a mitzvah, the mitzvah's *kedushah* and power are vastly intensified and its reach, in this world and upper worlds, is greatly extended. So, run—don't walk—to shul to pray, and to a *beit midrash* to study. Your presence, each time, is an incalculable contribution to the building of Jewishness and to the delight of Heaven. This is especially so if there wouldn't be a minyan without you!

Yes, if you do the same mitzvah by yourself, you will be rewarded. If you do it. But a solo mitzvah is puny in comparison; the community's mitzvah is tremendously diminished; and you will be MIA, out of the picture, an absence that can never be made up (*Kohelet Rabbah* 1:15).

A personal connection with the tzaddik is a necessity, time for yourself is critical. But don't forget: No Jew is an island. Be involved with a genuine Torah community!

* In case I need to allay your feminist indignation, the mutinous spies are called, and thus define, a "congregation." Since that congregation consisted of ten Jewish adult men, so does every future Jewish congregation. Nothing to do with patriarchal sexism, just cut-and-dry exegesis.

*a gutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!*

—Based on *Likutey Halakhot,
Nizkei Shekheinim* 4:8

SIDEPATH

The Rebbe talks about the special power that dancing and clapping have to make us happy and mitigate the negative things affecting us (*Likutey Moharan* I, 169). It is customary in every Breslov synagogue to dance each day after the morning and evening prayers. Many Breslover Chassidim dance after learning together, while some even dance daily by themselves. It's a surefire way to arouse a feeling of real joy and happiness.

Reb Noson once said to Reb Moshe Breslover, "I will give you a way to repent. Dance every day!" (*Aveneha Barzel*, p. 62).

PARASHAH PEARLS

By Chaim Kramer

13:2 Send for yourself men who will spy out the land

Parashah Overview

The topics in *Parashat Shelach* follow a logical sequence. The spies blemished the Holy Land, which represents *chidush ha-olam* (the renewal of the world—a miraculous type of living). Moses was able to attain forgiveness for the spies by arousing *da'at* (awareness of God) in the people through good rebuke, bringing them to repentance. The wine libations follow the account of the spies (Numbers 15:1-16) because wine, too, arouses *da'at* (cf. *Yoma* 76b). By drinking wine, a person can experience *da'at* and return to God.

Immediately afterwards, we find the laws of *challah* (giving a piece of one's dough to the Kohen) (Numbers 15:17-21), which apply in the Holy Land. By separating *challah*, we rectify the blemish of any foods that we have eaten solely for physical nourishment and attain the spiritual nourishment of those foods. This in turn rectifies faith; thus, the laws of sacrifices that atone for idolatry follow the laws of *challah* (*ibid.*, 15:22-26). And these are followed by the story of the one who desecrated Shabbat (*ibid.*, 15:32-

36), for Shabbat and the Festivals represent faith. At the end of the *parashah*, we read about the *tzitzit* (ibid., 15:37-41), for *tzitzit* represent the *chut shel chesed* (thread of lovingkindness) that effects forgiveness (LH I, p. 50a).

13:17 Go up to the Negev and climb the mountain

The Mountain And The Desert

The Negev desert is a relatively unattractive part of the Land of Israel. Moses told the spies to first scout out the less attractive areas of the Land, and then tour its more beautiful areas (Rashi).

The "mountain" represents the Temple (Rashi on Deuteronomy 3:25), which is analogous to a tzaddik's holy teachings. The "desert" represents the tzaddik's mundane conversation.

When a tzaddik wants to "go up"—that is, when he wants to raise people who are on a low spiritual level—he must first take them through the "desert," speaking to them on mundane topics. In this way, he draws them to serve God. Eventually, he will bring them to the "mountain" of the Holy Temple, which indicates a great level of *da'at* (knowledge of God) (LM I, 81:1).

Sometimes it happens that a tzaddik falls from his lofty spiritual level. When an ordinary person engages the tzaddik in mundane conversation—conversation about the "desert"—and the tzaddik has pleasure from this, it inspires the tzaddik to rise and see the "mountains"—to return to his exalted level. Then the tzaddik can raise the ordinary person to *da'at* (ibid., I, 81:3).

13:32 It is a land that consumes its inhabitants

God Repays Us According To Our Deeds

Yours, God, is the kindness, for You repay each man according to his deeds (Psalms 62:13).

God displays great kindness by repaying each person in accordance with his deeds. For if God were to punish each person with compassion and not in accordance with his deeds, the person might not realize his error and never undertake the proper repentance.

In particular, God recompenses man "measure for measure" in the Holy Land, as it

is written, "It is a land that consumes its inhabitants." *OKheLeT* (אכלת, consumes) is an acronym for the phrase *Atah Teshalem Le'ish Ke-ma'aseihu* (אתה תשלם לישי כמעשהו), You repay each man according to his deeds). This is why people who live in the Holy Land generally seem to endure more than their fair share of suffering (LM I, 187).

15:20 A dough-offering

The Mitzvah Of Challah Arouses The Desire To Serve God

The Torah law of separating *challah* applies only in the Holy Land. Our Sages instituted the practice of separating *challah* even outside the Holy Land, so as not to forget this mitzvah (Rambam, *Hilkhot Bikkurim* 5:7).

Challah (חלה) shares the same root as *toCheLet* (תחולת, desire) and *vayyChal* (ויחל, prayer). When we give *challah* to the Kohen, we arouse in ourselves a great desire to serve God. We perform this mitzvah in all places today to keep alive our great desire to return to God and the Holy Land (LH V, p. 436-219a).

15:38 Tell them to make themselves tzitzit on the corners of their garments

Wearing Tzitzit Helps One Overcome The Three Major Sins

Wearing *tzitzit* affords the ability to overpower the three major sins of idolatry, immorality and murder. This is seen in the word *leDoRoTaM* (לדורתם, throughout their generations), which contains the phrase *DoR TaM* (דור תם, perfect generation). Our Sages teach that the Generation of the Desert was *TaM* (free) from idolatry, *TaM* from immorality, and *TaM* from murder (*Tanna devei Eliyahu Rabbah* #26). Thus, *tzitzit* perfect us from evil characteristics (LH I, p. 72).

KITZUR L"M WEEKLY

13 — "Happy is the nation that knows the shofar blast" (Psalms 89:16); Divine Providence (continued)

10. But a person must seek and search very hard for a tzaddik like this. He must ask God to make him worthy of finding such a sage who will gather souls together, elevate them, and then renew them "as a fetus in the womb," thus bringing down Torah teachings. For only such a sage is able to rectify a

person and to lift him up from all the spiritual harm done to him by all of the physical desires. The tzaddik accomplishes this with two kinds of intellect, represented by the Hebrew letter *shin* which is written with three heads, and by the letter *shin* which is written with four heads [as they appear on the two sides of the *tefilin* worn on the head].

11. The greater the number of souls that come to the true tzaddik to receive Torah, the more the evil "wind which is generated upon the earth" is diminished and nullified. This evil wind refers to the questions posed by the heretics when they see the righteous suffer and the evil prosper. But when many souls gather together around the true tzaddikim, the "wind" of these questions is silenced.

12. It is appropriate that the people who travel and come to the true tzaddik should experience an increased love for one another, and that they should awaken and remind one another about the service of God. [When this occurs,] it is a sign that during the time they were with the true tzaddik, their intentions were acceptable and they have begun to undergo a positive spiritual rejuvenation. [This lesson implies that a person can receive the salvation he needs by relating all his secrets to a good friend, as stated in the sacred literature.]



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