

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yeimda

REALISM AND IDEALISM are contrasting viewpoints in the drama of the Twelve Spies (Nu. 13-14). Ten were realists. Examining the promised land with their own eyes – impressed by its external conditions, the political, economic and military – they told the truth. Their report was accurate, their conclusions inescapable: the inhabitants of the land are stronger than we are; we are unable to stand up against them. These spies, and the entire generation who followed them, remained and perished in the desert. Their realistic verdict, that to enter the land is impossible, became tragically real for them. The two dissenters (Yehoshua and Kalev) were idealists. Facing the same reality, and no less attuned to it, they reached an opposite conclusion (13:30): “We will march and conquer the land, for we are well able to do it.” Imbued with faith and encouraged by divine promise, these two saw the “impossible” become true – for themselves and the new generation who did succeed to enter and inherit the land. Great achievements are made possible by dreams, vision, resolve and courage – by idealism that does not ignore reality, but rather realizes its hidden potentials and unseen possibilities. In crucial moments, idealism emerges as the more realistic approach.

Scriptural reading for Saturday, July 1:

SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

HAF-TARAH: Joshua 2:1-24

Rosh Chodesh Tamuz, July 5 and 6

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 26:
SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41
HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

SELFLESS LEADERSHIP is shown by Moses: his concern is for the people, not his own benefit or glory. At the moment of dire crisis, when the people rail and rebel against him (after hearing the defaming and defeatist report of the 10 spies about the Land), God turns to him (Nu. 14:12): "I will punish them with plague and disown them and make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." Moses, humble and loyal, rejects this plan; instead he eloquently pleads with God to forgive and spare the people. Moses' faithful leadership shines through the fateful hour of mutiny and agony. Moses does not use his position to enhance his own fortune and future, but to help and sustain his people. True leadership is selfless.

Candlelight time 8:41 Sabbath ends 9:34

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 10:

SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE CONCEPT OF "MINYAN" - the required quorum of 10 to form a congregation, an "edah" (Nu. 14:27) - points to the significance of both community and individuality in Jewish life. One's Jewishness is fully maintained and asserted through community participation. A Jew is not alone; Jews cling together, form their community wherever they live, and share responsibility with all Jews Everywhere. This in turn enhances and refines one's sense of personal dignity and elevates the worth of each individual; each one counts. Rav Nahman of Brazlav (1772-1811) observed: "Nine sages do not form a "minyān;" but one common person joining them completes the "minyān."

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Rabbi Yehuda's Use Of Word Disputed

I must confess to a reaction of shock and a sense of disorientation upon reading Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's use of the word edah in the context of the sentence in last week's Biblical reading, Shelach Lechah.

He makes a beautiful tsimmes over that word as pointing to the concept of minyan - "of both community and individuality in Jewish life."

But edah in that sedra is part of the phrase La-edah ha-ra-ah - which translates as evil (or wicked) community. The sentence in English translation reads, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation...?"

From this painful denunciation by our God of the difficult Israelite people, Rabbi Yehuda takes off on a lyrical trapeze, blyng through the air of nisht-geshtoygen, nisht-gefloygen interpretation?

Oh what a sneaky ball we serve
When we try to pitch
a theological curve!

AVRAMOSE NEWMAN
Willoughby

Rabbi Yehuda's Use Of Word Is Talmudic

The use of "edah" (Nu. 14:27) as pointing to the concept of "minyan" is explicit in the Talmud (Megila 23b) and known to students of Humash and Rashi.

Avramose Newman of Willoughby, who confessed (June 16) "to a reaction of shock and a sense of disorientation upon reading" it in my column (June 9), is apparently unaware of the rabbinic sources. The verse is not, as he claims "a painful denunciation by our God of the difficult Israelite people," but refers to the 10 who spoke against the land.

They are the "edah ra-ah" (bad congregation). Since they are called "edah," our Sages deduced that a minyan of 10 is a valid congregation. Although "ra-ah" (bad), it is still a community of God.

The English translation, quoted by Newman, "How long shall I (God) bear with this evil congregation?" - is only a conjecture of the King James Version, and not found at all in the original.

The correct meaning of this verse is: "Till when will this bad edah continue to murmur?" Now, "bad" they are; but "edah" they also are. Eventually and hopefully, they will stop murmuring and start learning.

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA
College of Jewish Studies

Rashi Is Source of 'Edah' Interpretation

Mr. A. Newman's "sense of disorientation" arising out of an association of the word "edah" in Shelach with the general concept of edah as "minyan" and "community" ought not to be attributed to Rabbi Yehuda but to the commentator Rashi in whose comments on Nu. 14:27 we are told that it is our source for the requirement that a congregation or edah requires 10.

Quite clearly Rabbi Yehuda's beautiful remarks were offered not as an interpretation of edah in the context of Shelach but as an elaboration of the concept of minyan whose source is indeed the word edah in Shelach.

If something of this sort is enough to put A. Newman into a state of "shock and disorientation," I would seriously recommend that he look for more pervasive causes of his instability.

As a matter of fact, Rabbi Yehuda has once again put it straight across the plate and it is Newman who has struck out! Give me Rabbi Yehuda's "beautiful tzimes" anyday in place of Newman's mish-mash of mixed metaphors!

LEE JACOBS
Cleveland Heights

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

SHELAH

For Shabbat of June 24, 1995

THE CONCEPT OF *MINYAN* -- the required quorum of 10 adult individuals to form a congregation (*edah*) for worship -- is related in the Talmud (*Megilah* 23b) to the 10 "bad" spies who spoke against the Land. They were denounced by God (Nu. 14:27): "How long will this bad *edah* continue to grumble?" Now, "bad" they were; but, nonetheless, they were called "*edah*" -- congregation. Hence, any 10 individual Jews comprise a valid congregation, an *edah*; making up the required quorum, *minyan* (lit., count), for Jewish public worship. This concept of *minyan* points to the significance of both community and individuality in Jewish life. It underlines the centrality of community: A Jew can not fully live Jewishly alone. A Jew needs a Jewish community. Moreover, this concept of *minyan* illustrates the ultimate worth of every individual: Each one counts. A Hassidic saying: "Nine sages do not form a *minyan*; but one common Jew joining them completes the *minyan*, creating a congregation.

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

THE MINYAN CONCEPT, requiring a quorum of 10 to form a viable congregation, *edah*, for worship -- is related to the 10 spies who spoke against the Land (*Megilah* 23b). Denounced by God as "bad" (Nu. 14:27) -- "How long will this bad *edah* continue to grumble?" -- they are, nonetheless, called by Him "*edah*." Hence, any assembly of 10 individuals comprises a valid congregation for public worship.

The *minyán* concept underscores the significance of both community and individuality in Jewish life. The community is central: A Jew cannot fully express himself Jewishly alone; he needs a community. The individual has ultimate worth: Each Jew counts. "Nine Jewish sages do not form a *minyán*; one common Jew, joining them, completes the *minyán*." (Hassidic saying).

Friday, June 11, 1993

HT OF THE WEEK

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

“A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY” (Nu. 13:27; 14:8): This description of the Promised Land was repeated by all 12 scouts sent by Moses to survey the land; by the majority of 10 in their negative report, and by the minority of two in their positive report. What is the significance of this poetic description of the land?

This charming phrase describes the uncultivated regions of the Promised Land, prior to conquest by the Israelites. Many of its hills and slopes were uninhabited – covered with wild thickets and forests and filled with many varieties of flowers. Wild goats, foraging on the natural food supply, provided the “milk flow” and wild bees, feeding on the flowers, the “honey flow” (*hareuveni*). It was a pristine land waiting for deforestation and cultivation by peaceful settlement. Both the detractors as well as the endorsers of the conquest of the land could have used this same celebrated epithet to promote their opposing views.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

CLEVELAND JEWISH NEWS / JUNE 14, 1996

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

“FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY” (NU. 13:27;14:8): This description of the Promised Land appears in the reports of all 12 scouts sent by Moses to survey the land. Both the 10 scouts in their negative report, as well as the two in their positive ones, repeat this laudatory remark. What is its significance?

This poetic phrase describes the uncultivated regions of Canaan, prior to the Israelite conquest: Many of its hills and slopes were uninhabited – covered with wild thickets and forests and filled

with many varieties of flowers. Wild goats, foraging on the natural food supply, provided the “milk flow,” and wild bees, feeding on the flowers, the “honey flow” (*nogah hareuveni*). It was a land waiting for deforestation and cultivation by peaceful settlement.

This description of the land as “flowing with milk and honey” also points to its natural resilience. Even when it is left uncultivated, as a result of wars and exiles, conquest or desolation, it is still vibrating with life. With restoration, the land will yield its full bounty.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

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Thought of the Week

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SELF-ESTEEM is a key to a person's esteem by others. The spies who were sent by Moses to report on the Promised Land were astonished by the enormous size of its inhabitants (nu. 13:32-33): "All the people we saw there are of large measurements; there we saw the Nefilim (legendary giants), the descendents of Anak (progenitor of giants). And we were in our own eyes as mere grasshoppers; and so we were in their eyes." People are usually perceived in the manner that they perceive themselves. Two of the 12 spies, Yehoshua and Kalev—meeting the very same giants—were not intimidated. Far from feeling like tiny grasshoppers, they emerged as giants in spirit. In their high self-esteem and abiding confidence they insisted: "Up we shall go and inhabit the land. We can certainly do it!" These two—and not the other ten—did it.

Candlelight time 8:45 Sabbath ends 9:38

Scriptural reading for Saturday, June 19:

SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Father's Day - Sunday, June 20

Rosh Hodesh Tammuz:

Monday and Tuesday, June 21, 22

S Friday, June 7, 1991

THE WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

OVERESTIMATING THE ENEMY'S STRENGTH: Intimidated by the impressive might of the Canaanites who occupied the Promised Land, the Ten Spies reported in dismay: "We cannot go up (*to fight*) against these people, for they are stronger than we!" (Nu. 13:31). The Hebrew for "than we" ("*mimmenu*") may also mean "than He" (God!). This double meaning of the phrase indicates that the Spies' lack of faith in their own people's competence (e.g., seeing the enemy as "stronger than *we*" (the people), reflects a lack of faith in God Himself, as if seeing the enemy as "stronger than *He*" (God). When the people lose faith in themselves, they inevitably abdicate faith in God.

Contrary to current religious notions, it is self-esteem, rather than the lack of it, which is the mirror of true faith in God.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

SELF-ESTEEM IS ESSENTIAL FOR FAITH IN GOD: In their bleak report on the promised land the spies describe its inhabitants as "stronger than *we!*" (Nu. 13:31). The Hebrew (*mimenu*) may also mean "stronger than *He!*" (God). The spies' low opinion of their own people's strength implies lack of faith in God who has promised the land to His people and will grant them the power to obtain and retain it.

Lack of self-confidence -- on the personal or national level -- may reflect a lack of faith in God. Contrary to popular views, it is the enhancement of one's sense of self-worth, rather than its suppression, that nourishes as well as mirrors true faith in God.

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

"THEY ARE STRONGER THAN WE!" (Nu. 13:31). So claimed the discouraged Ten Spies about the occupiers of the Promised Land. The Hebrew for 'than we' ("*mimenu*") may also mean "than He" (God!). This double meaning of the phrase indicates that the Spies' disbelief in their own people's strength ("they are stronger than we") reflects a lack of faith in God ("they are stronger than He") – Who promised the land to His people.

Contrary to current religious notions, it is self-esteem, rather than the lack of it, which is the mirror of true faith in God.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

SHELAH

June 30, 1989

SELF-ESTEEM IS ESSENTIAL FOR FAITH IN GOD: In their bleak report on the promised land the spies describe its inhabitants as "stronger than we!" (Nu. 13:31). The Hebrew (mimenu) may also mean "stronger than He!" (God). The spies' low opinion of their own people's strength implies lack of faith in God who has promised the land to His people and will grant them the power to obtain and retain it.

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Scriptural reading for Saturday, June 19:

SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Father's Day - Sunday, June 20

Rosh Hodesh Tammuz:

Monday and Tuesday, June 21, 22

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

A GOOD HEART AND A GOOD EYE are two Jewish virtues. The former (in Hebrew, *lev tov*) indicates human compassion, openness to others, a genuine willingness to give of oneself; the latter (in Hebrew, *ayin tova*) refers to the lack of envy, the ability to truly enjoy the success of others without bitterness. To be inwardly compelled to give is *lev tov*, and, when one must give, to give generously is *ayin tova*. Both virtues complement each other. But the "heart" and the "eye"—if not controlled—may lead one astray (Nu. 15:39). Both, claim our Sages, are the two agents of immorality; the heart referring to passion and lust, and the eye to sensuality and greediness. But with Torah, one can acquire a "good heart" and a "good eye" both in conduct and outlook.

Candlelight time 8:45 Sabbath ends 9:38

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 20:
SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41
HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

06/07/75

Candlelight time 8:39 Sabbath ends 9:33

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 7:

SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

HEART, EYE, AND MOUTH ("lev," Ayin," "peh") figure in the story of the "meraglim" (the fact-finding committee sent by Moses from the desert to tour the Land of Israel). Their failure, as our Sages put it, was that their "eyes" followed both their "hearts" and their "mouths:" their view (eye) was dictated by their emotions (heart), and was expressed (mouth) before proper examination. The Sidra concludes with a warning (Nu. 15:39): "Follow not your hearts and your eyes." On the sensual level it is the eye that leads the heart (Rashi): "The eye sees and discovers, the heart seeks and covets, then the whole body completes and commits." On the intellectual level, however (Sifre Nu. 115), "the eye follows the heart." What man sees is determined by his pre-conceived ideas. As for the mouth, it must never precede the eye. First open your eyes; examine and verify, then your mouth: talk and declare. "Sages, be careful with your words." (Avot).

Candlelight time 8:45, Sabbath ends 9:38

Scriptural Reading for Saturday

morning, June 19:

SH'LACH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

HAFTARAH: Joshua 2:1-24

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK: The scouting episode (Nu. 13-14) displays the quality of human inquiry, showing how perplexing and fallible is man's speculation. The 12 delegates who scouted the Land returned with contrasting reports; the majority, pessimistic and defeatist, and the minority (of two) enthusiastic and inspiring. Their mission is repeatedly referred to as "tur," conveying the notion of wandering about. The same term reappears in the sidra's epilogue, as if to crystallize the narrative's moral; By remembering and doing the divine mitzvot, "you will not wander (taturu) after your hearts and eyes." (15:39) The heart and eye are two solicitors of wrongdoing: the eye discovers, the heart covets, and the whole body commits (midrash). Scripture, however, mentions "heart" before "eye," noting that it is the eye that follows the heart (Sifre). Man's way of beholding and judging his environment is intensively determined by his ideas and convictions. Man's perception is shaped by his conception. Human inquiry is not self-sufficient. It constantly needs foundation and direction.

By Rabbi Zvi Ye'hūda

Candlelight time 8:39 Sabbath ends 9:33

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 7:
SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41
HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

REVERENCE OR IRREVERENCE for the divine word—how are they expressed? Reverence, even within the sphere of the ordinary and the mundane; irreverence, even within the framework of formal piety and religious observance. So insist the talmudic Sages: He who recites the Shema, or engages in other forms of worship and study, in filthy surroundings, degrades the divine word. Also, a Torah scholar who lacks the love and devotion to perpetuate the word of God—he does not learn to the extent of his ability or learns only for himself but does not teach others—is guilty of “despising the word of the Lord” (Nu. 15:31). Within this category of contempt for the word of God, the Talmud mentions also the following two (San. 99b): He who distorts the true meanings in the Torah (“gilui panim”), and he who hurts the feelings of his fellow human being (“halbanat panim”). Intriguingly, the term “panim” (lit., face) is used in both. Both each word of Torah and each person are molded in the image of God, their “face”—namely, their existential manifestation in this world—reflecting divine dignity and glory. Both acts—marring and disfiguring the “face” of Torah, and embarrassing and shaming the “face” of a human individual—express blatant irreverence and contempt for God’s words.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

A SCARLET CORD, hanging outside the window of Rahab the harlot of Jericho, served as the prearranged sign for the conquering army of the Israelites to save her home from destruction, repaying her for her kindness to the Israelite spies. This scarlet cord is called in Hebrew (Joshua 2:18) by a three-word idiom: "tikvat chut ha-shani." While the third word gives the color, scarlet, the first two are merely synonyms for cord, chut meaning thread and tikvat a line (from the word "kav"); in a following verse (22) tikvat replaces chut altogether. On a deeper level, however, the term tikvat in this narrative possesses a strikingly poetic impact: tikvah expresses the Jewish idea and ideal of hope. As its root-word kav suggests, true hope means pursuing a "line" of endeavor, with both vision and purpose, towards the expected goal, thus combining aspiration with determination, yearning and action. This scarlet cord was for Rahab and her family more than an identification signal, a crimson linear string; it meant for them great expectations and deep supplications, a symbol of hope, a tikvah both in its physical and spiritual sense. Woven into all our human efforts for rescue and redemption must be our heart-felt investment of tikvah—hope and faith, conviction and resolve. The scarlet cord in the biblical plot was, as the Hebrew subtly implies, "a cord of hope."

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 23:

..SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

..HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

“TIKWAH” is hope; it also means a rope. This duality in meaning is illustrated in the story of Rahab, Jericho’s harlot-innkeeper (Joshua 2:18-21): Rahab gave shelter to two Israelite spies, helping them escape. In gratitude, they pledged to spare her life, and the lives of her relatives, during the city’s conquest. In order to make her home recognizable, Rahab tied a scarlet rope to her window, a “tikwah” – a rope of hope.

Both facets of “tikwah” – the tangible object (rope), and the abstract idea (hope) – convey vivid imagery of a line (“kaw,” the root-word of “tikwah”). A person with hope, keeping his sense of destination and direction, envisions before him a way (“line”), leading to his goal. The scarlet thread (cord) was for Rahab a pipeline to life (hope), her “tikwah” in its dual sense.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE DUAL MEANING OF TIKVAH (hope and rope) is illustrated in the biblical story of Rahab (Joshua 2:18.21). Rahab, harlot-innkeeper in Jericho, gave shelter to two Israelite spies and helped them escape. In gratitude, they pledged to spare her life and the lives of her close relatives when the city would be conquered. But how, they wondered, would they recognize her home? Rahab tied a scarlet rope, called, in this story, *tikvah* to her window. Now what is the relationship between the idea of hope (the regular sense of the word) and a rope? Both conjure the vivid imagery of a line, *kav*. And *kav* is in the core of *tikvah*. A person with hope, maintaining a sense of destination and expectation, envisions before him a clear line, a way, a direction, leading to his goal. For Rahab, her *tikvah* was both a tangible object and a sustaining concept, her rope and hope. The linear strand of scarlet thread was her pipeline to life.

Candlelight time 8:37 Sabbath ends 9:31
Scriptural reading for Saturday, June 4:
SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41
HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 11:

SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

RAHAB THE HARLOT of Jericho (Joshua 2:1-21) is seen, in light of Rabbinic tradition, as a praiseworthy character, an engaging and appealing heroine. The biblical narrative notes neither her appearance nor her professional rank. But Jewish oral lore (Aggada) portrays her as extremely attractive – one of the four most beautiful women in ancient world (the other three: Sarah, Abigail, Esther) – and highly successful in her line of work. Why did she choose to help the two Israelite spies, betray her own people and join the enemy? Her own explanation, in speaking to the spies, combines prudence with theology. Convinced of Israel's victory, she wants to ensure safety for herself and her relatives. Her conviction, however, is highlighted with profound faith in God of Israel as Ruler of the universe, "in the heavens above and the earth below." Thus she becomes a true convert to Israel's religion. Aggada (TB Meg. 14b) spices up the story with a touch of romance: She then married Israel's leader, Joshua.

Candlelight time 8:43 Sabbath ends 9:37

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 15:

SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41

HAFTARAH: Joshua 2

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

“TZITZIT,” the fringes on the four corners of a garment (Num. 16:37-41; Deut. 22:12), are a visible reminder for man, involved in his daily affairs, of Torah’s teachings. Tzitzit means blooming and exquisiteness. Sprouting, sparkling flowers are “tzitzim.” The magnificent golden-plate on the forehead of the High Priest is “tzitz.” The lover’s “peering through the lattice,” portrayed by his beloved in the Song of Songs (2:9), is “metzitz.” Thus, the name tzitzit points to its core: prominence and display – “look at it and recall.” “Talit” (from “talol,” to cover, protect) is the Mishnah’s term for the garment of antiquity: a four-cornered cloth of wool or linen, used nightly as a bedcloth for sleep and daily as a loose outer toga for work and walk. This talit, with its required tzitzit, is essentially a mundane garment, neither a synagogue item nor a “prayer shawl.” Customarily, however, one is enwrapped in a full-sized talit while engaged in prayer and wears a smaller-sized talit (“talit katan” while engaged in other daily activities. Worship in Judaism is an all-embracing, on-going experience. No special attire is needed for encountering God. But, compelled as he is by his regular affairs, man needs a constant reminder of his Divine duty.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

SLANDER is deemed a grievous offense in Judaism, the slanderer deserving the most severe punishment, even divinely afflicted leprosy. Even great prophets—who must address themselves to the faults of their people with their divine messages—are not excused when upon their own initiative they slander people. When Moses complained before God about Israel (Ex. 4:1), “they will not believe me,” God rebuked him, “How do you know?” And because he angrily called his people “rebels” (Nu. 20:10), Moses was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Isaiah, too, was called to task for slandering the people in his personal appeal to God (6:5): “I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” Ironically, by saying this he only underlined the uncleanliness of his own lips. Therefore, explain the Sages, a Seraph (a flaming angel) touched his lips with a burning ember, purifying them and preparing them for uttering the prophetic mission. God does not tolerate slander, even from a prophet.

Candlelight time 8:43 Sabbath ends 9:48
Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 15:
SHELAH: Numbers 13:1-15:41
HAFTARAH: Joshua 2
Father's Day - Sunday, June 16
Rosh Hodesh Tammuz - Wednesday, June 19

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

"THEY ARE STRONGER THAN WE!" (Nu. 13:31). So claimed the discouraged Ten Spies about the occupiers of the Promised Land. The Hebrew for 'than we' (*"mimenu"*) may also mean "than He" (God!). This double meaning of the phrase indicates that the Spies' disbelief in their own people's strength ("they are stronger than we") reflects a lack of faith in God ("they are stronger than He") - Who promised the land to His people.

Contrary to current religious notions, it is self-esteem, rather than the lack of it, which is the mirror of true faith in God.

No 'perfect hate' in Torah

Rabbi Yakov Katz's letter (CJN, June 7), preaching "perfect hate" towards "apikorsim" (apostates)—among whom he includes "even one who believes that the entire Torah was given to us from heaven except for one sentence or one Talmudic exegesis"—gives a distorted view of Torah. Practicing what he preaches, he would end up hating almost everyone; this includes himself, unless he is sure his own faith is impeccable.

The authentic Torah view is derived not from selective quotes, but from the whole direction of Torah, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness" and its aim peace. Thus Torah's ways are not to belittle or hate others, but to seek

and see the good in others, and treat every person with respect and kindness. This includes the many so-called "apikorsim" in our society.

So says my unforgettable teacher Rabbi Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz (1875-1953; **Hazon Ish**, YD 13:16): "It is our duty to draw them to us with cords of love, and place them within rays of light." With "cords of love" and "rays of light"—not "perfect hate" and self-righteous derision—does a true Torah-person relate to others.

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA
University Heights

The quote in its entirety

An eloquent reply to the "Point of View" by Rabbi Bruce Abrams (CJN, May 31) can be found clearly stated by the Chofetz Chaim, of blessed memory, in the book (alluded to by Abrams) by the same name in Ch. 8, par. 5: "The entire prohibition of Loshon Horah (slander) is only applicable to an individual who through the laws of Torah is yet included in the category of one who keeps the Torah and mitzvot; however, those people are recognizable as apostates (apikorsim), it is an obligation to shame and embarrass them, whether in their presence or not, in regard to anything he sees them do or hears about them."

As King David said in Tehilim (139:21-22), "G-d, do I not hate those who cause others to hate You? And do I not quarrel with those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them as my enemies." (Avos D'Reb Noson 16). An apostate is defined as one who denies the Torah and prophecy in Israel, whether the Written or Oral Torah. Even one who believes that the entire Torah was given to us from Heaven except for one sentence or one Talmudical exegesis is considered an apostate.

RABBI YAKOV KATZ
Wickliffe

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