

עמידה בנסיון הרב אליהו חקקיאן

In Parshas Beshalach, Yehoshua and Kalev show us two *mehalchim* in how to face a *nisayon*. Their *nisayon*, of reporting on the condition of Eretz Yisroel, was very difficult. In fact, Moshe Rabbeinu deemed the *nisayon* so hard that he personally *davened* for Yehoshua. It was difficult not only for the two of them, but even for the other *meraglim* whom were hand-picked by Moshe and whom the Torah describe as being “*anashim chashuvim*.”

Meforshim explain the complexity of the *nisayon* for the other *meraglim* as follows. While Klal Yisroel lived in the *Midbar* they benefited from an existence that was *l'ma'alah min hateva*, supernatural. They ate *man* and drank from the traveling *be'er* and were surrounded and protected by the *Ananei HaKavod*. However, they knew that once they entered Eretz Yisroel everything would change and they would have to live by the standard laws of nature. The problem that vexed them was that, *b'derech hateva*, Eretz Yisroel is “אֶרֶץ אֹכֵלֶת יוֹשְׁבֵיהָ הִוא” (במדבר יג, לב), it eats its inhabitants. They believed that Klal Yisroel would not survive the move into Eretz Yisroel and therefore it would be suicide to do so. For them, that argument was too compelling to allow themselves to follow Moshe Rabbeinu’s directives. So, they came back and said it was impossible to go into the land. They preferred the supernatural existence of the *Midbar* to dying from Eretz Yisroel. That was their *nisayon*.

Yehoshua and Kalev had this compelling argument as part of their *nisayon* as well. But on top of that, they had the added component of peer-pressure from the other *meraglim*. Yehoshua and Kalev were under tremendous pressure to join the ‘club’ of not going into Eretz Yisroel.

Yehoshua was saved because of the *tefillos* of Moshe Rabbeinu. Kalev, however, had to deal with the *nisayon* by himself. How did Kalev overcome the pressures of the argument and of his peers?

Rav Elyashiv zt”l says a marvelous *vort*. Two *pesukim* tell us what Kalev did. Why does the *posuk* say “וַיבֹא עַד חֶבְרוֹן” (יג, כב) in the singular form when the whole group of *meraglim* came to Chevron? *Chazal darshen* the singular tense to mean that Kalev himself came to Chevron in order to daven by *Ma'aras HaMachpelah (kivrei Avos)* that he should be saved from the *atzas meraglim*. Later on, Hashem tells Moshe “וַיַּעֲבֵד כָּלֵב עֵקֶב הִיתָה רוּחַ אַחֲרַת עַמּוּי” (יד, כד), because Kalev had a different spirit he followed My ways. What was this “different spirit”?

Rav Elyashiv explains that when Miriam Hanevia was a child she came to her father Amram and told him that *Moshian shel Yisrael* would be born through him. Amram then remarried Yocheved, and when Moshe Rabbeinu was born the entire house was filled with light. Amram then kissed Miriam on the head and told her that her prophecy had been fulfilled. Three months later, when they put Moshe in the basket and into the river, Amram gave Miriam a *petch* on the head and asked her what happened to her prophecy. *Chazal* tell us Miriam stood from afar to watch Moshe’s basket, with her eye on what would happen with her *nevuah*.

Rav Elyashiv points out that the word used in that *posuk* “וַיַּעֲבֵד” (שמות ב, ד) is “וַיַּעֲבֵד” which connotes standing strongly, resolutely, and steadfast. This comes to show that Miriam never

doubted her *nevuah* one iota, she merely wanted to see how it would come to be. She watched for eighty years for it to come to fruition.

After *Krias Yam Suf*, we all know that when Miriam sang *shira* with the women they also played musical instruments. Why did they have these instruments but the men did not? The *Midrash* answers that Miriam knew Hashem was going to perform miracles for Klal Yisroel therefore she, and the women who followed her, left *Mitzrayim* prepared. They knew that they would sing praise to Hashem afterwards, therefore they brought instruments out of *Mitzrayim* with them.

Every time Miriam faced adversity or difficulties, she went back to her point of strength-her *nevuah*. She knew that Moshe was to be the *Moshian Shel Yisrael* and she knew that Klal Yisroel would leave *Mitzrayim*, therefore she never got scared or worried about what came up.

Rav Elyashiv goes on to explain the “*ruach acheres*” by Kalev to mean that the spirit of another (feminine) person was with him. The spirit of his wife Miriam, of not giving up hope and instead falling back to a point of strength, is what helped Kalev overcome the *nisayon* of joining the other *meraglim*.

I think what Rav Elyashiv zt”l means is that Kalev came to *kivrei Avos* to daven specifically because of the immense doubt he felt about the situation. The *meraglim* had a compelling argument against entering Eretz Yisroel, therefore Kalev davened by the exact people whom Hashem had guaranteed the land to. Hashem promised Eretz Yisroel to be the homeland for Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov’s descendants. This is why Kalev went to Chevron to daven there. This strategy of reverting to one’s place of strength is how Kalev beat the *nisayon* of the *meraglim*.

In our own lives, we are presented with new *nisyonos* on a daily basis. We are approached by new ideas, ideologies, gadgets, shortcuts, and many other things which can easily trip us up. For example, business ideas of playing different shtick or schemes to be successful. They may not be so kosher, but they are compelling and will lead to success. Other examples are gadgets and technologies which may not be one hundred percent kosher, but that’s the world we live in and the key to success.

How are we to withstand the pressure of tempting avenues for success? Furthermore, everyone else is doing it; all of my competitors are doing it, how can I fall behind? How do we withstand this constant bombardment?

I think the answer is to follow Kalev and Miriam by revisiting our point of strength. Baruch Hashem, we all went through schools, yeshivos, and had *rebbeim* and *roshei yeshivos*. We were imbued with Torah values and infused with *hashkafos* from these roots. We can take a step back from our daily life and put ourselves back in the mindset of where we were in the *bais medrash*. Then we can look at our challenges and give a convincing answer to, “is it kosher? Should I be doing this?”

Chazal tell us that when the *yetzer hara* comes to meet us, we should pull him to *bais hamedrash*. Why? Because when we pull him to our point of strength where we hold the upper ground and battle advantage, we can melt and obliterate the *yetzer hara*. Just like Kalev, when we go back to our point of strength, our roots of *limud Torah*, we can easily overcome our *nisyonos* every day.