



BADERECH

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K'vod Shamayim

Rav Chanan Porat zt'l was a unique *ish esh-kolot* or 'renaissance man', a *talmid chacham* and poet, paratrooper and educator, in love with the Nation, Torah and Land of Israel. A founder of Gush Emunim, he was also a pioneer, builder and eventually a Member of Knesset. Rav Chanan was often sought out for his comments on current events. He spoke with passion and wit, and was never shy about sharing his opinions.

Rav Chanan's daughter Tirtza described how one afternoon, he was sitting with a *sefer* open in front of him, pen in hand writing his weekly Torah column, and fielding non-stop calls on two different phone lines. At one point, the producer of a popular prime-time Israeli television show called to ask Rav Chanan if he would appear on the program.

In the midst of the hustle and bustle, Rav Chanan paused for a moment, furrowed his brow in contemplation and calmly asked the producer, "Do you think that my participation will give *nachat ruach* to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, pleasure to the Holy One? Will it be *marbeh k'vod Shamayim*, increasing the Divine honor?"

Taken aback, the television producer was unable to answer definitively, and offered a hesitant 'I'm not sure...'

"Well, if that is the case, then I will have to pass. Thank you."

Our Parsha leads us on a saga of tragic, painful events coming on the heels of generations of suffering and exile.

According to Ramban, although the end of the story is disastrous, the Meraglim had holy intentions. Bnei Yisrael had been escorted and sustained by the Well of Miriam, led by a pillar of fire and surrounded by clouds of glory. Their sojourn in the desert was one of constant miracles and revealed Divine providence. Why, they considered, should they enter the Land of Israel only to be forced to engage its inhabitants in battle, build cities and deal with the complex material needs of a worldly society? Why should they enter a situation in which they had to put aside spiritual pursuits enough to work the land and cultivate fields, when they were enjoying the life of *Deveikus* and being nourished by *Manna* that fell from Heaven?

The Meraglim intended to keep us in the ideal spiritual environment of the *Midbar*, nestled in a womb-like experience where we wouldn't be busied with 'lowly' worldly affairs that could interfere with our connection to Hashem. What they failed to take into account was actually the most important factor: *ratzon Hashem*, the Divine will and desire. In following the report and influence of the Spies, we engaged in an embarrassing rebellion against Hashem's will.

When we are so certain in our belief of the righteousness of our cause, we can become filled with *kavod atzmi*, self-importance. This is a subtle act of theft; *kavod* belongs to Hashem. When taking *kavod* for ourselves,

Hashem's *kavod* is diminished in the world, so-to-speak.

After Moshe's plea for forgiveness, Hashem says, "*Salachti k'dvarecha*, I have forgiven them in accordance with your word. However, as surely as I live, *v'yemalei k'vod Hashem es kol ha-aretz*, and the glory of G-d fills all of the earth... all the people *haro'im es k'vodi*, who while seeing My glory, and the signs that I performed in Egypt and in the desert, have tested me these ten times and not listened to My voice... they will not see the Land that I swore to their fathers." (14:20-23)

In meting out the repercussions of the Nation's lack of faith and following the Meraglim, HaKadosh Baruch Hu reminds us that His glory and presence, His *kavod*, fills the earth. There is no place devoid of Hashem. The *ratzon Hashem* is that we should reveal this omnipresent glory throughout "all the earth" by creating a *dira b'tachtonim*, a dwelling for Hashem in the 'lower', physical world. Our mundane, physical day-to-day acts are themselves a revelation of Hashem on earth.

While holy and well-intended, the mistake of the Meraglim teaches us how clear we must be regarding our higher purpose: to bring *Nachas Ruach* to Hashem and be *mar-beh k'vod Shamayim*. May we have the courage to "pass" on any offer that is not aligned with Hashem's desire to dwell here, in our

world and within ourselves. ■

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