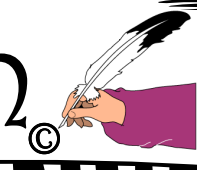


Parashas Shelach Kinder Torah



Eye Spy

“Avi, it looks like you have a really good pair of binoculars.”
 “I do, Chaim. I received them as a birthday gift.”
 “Mazel tov. What are you looking at?”
 “That village off in the distance.”
 “That is really far away. Can you see it clearly?”
 “Yes. Here, take a look.”
 “Thank you. Wow! It looks so close and clear. You can see everything. You can be a real spy with these binoculars.”
 “Spy? How can I be a spy, Chaim? A spy is someone who gathers information and secrets for the enemy. I would be seeing secret things for myself, not for any enemy.”
 “Don’t be so sure about that, Avi.”
 “What do you mean, Chaim?”
 “You may see something destructive. It burns a visual image into your memory. Later, when you are trying to learn Torah, you cannot get that sight out of your mind. It ruins your whole day.”
 “That is terrible. But who is the enemy?”
 “He is none other than . . . the *Yetzer Hora* (Evil Inclination). He tries to get you to look at things you should not see, in order to drag you down to the spiritual depths.”
 “Oy vey. What shall I do?”
 “The Torah states at the end of this week’s parasha, ‘Do not explore after your heart and after your eyes which you stray.’ (Bamidbar 15:39). The Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachos) explains that the heart and the eyes are two agents of *aveyra* (sin). They draw the person towards *aveyros*. However, they can also draw the person towards good. If they are agents of the *Yetzer Hatov*, all is well. They seek out mitzvos and good deeds for the person to perform. However, if they are agents of the *Yetzer Hora*, oy va voy.”
 “I see. I really am a spy. A secret agent of my *Yetzer*. May Hashem help that it should be the *Yetzer Hatov*.”
 “Amen.”

Kinderlach . . .
 A person is happy when he uses Hashem’s gifts for the purpose that they were intended. He gave us a wondrous creation - two eyes that see. If we use them to look upon holy things - *sefarim* (holy books), *mitzvos*, and *tsaddikim*, then they will stay pure, and draw us toward mitzvos. However, one who does not guard his eyes is led down the path of spiritual destruction. Set your eyes on the right path, *kinderlach*. Be an eye spy for the *Yetzer Hatov*.

Time is Precious

“And you will see it, and you will remember all of Hashem’s mitzvos” (Bamidbar 15:39). “In order to remember and do all of My mitzvos” (Bamidbar 15:40). These two verses inform us that the *tzitzis* will cause us to remember the mitzvos of Hashem. The *Chofetz Chaim* points out that you remember something that you have learned at one time. We must learn. If we do not learn Torah, we will have nothing to remember. Every minute of learning is precious, as the following story illustrates.

“Taxi!”
 “Yes sir! Where can I take you?”



“I must go to an office in the city, drop off a piece of paper, and return to the Yeshiva. Do you have an hourly rate?”
 “Yes sir. Ninety shekels per hour.”
 “Let’s see. That is 1½ shekels a minute. It’s a deal. Let’s see if we can make this whole trip in half an hour.”
 “B’ezrat Hashem. May I ask you a question?”
 “Surely.”
 “Do you ever travel to other cities in a taxi?”
 “The truth is that I rarely take taxis at all. Today I took a cab because I am in the midst of my learning seder in the Yeshiva. I must travel to this office now; I have no choice. However, our Torah teaches us that every minute of learning Torah is worth much more than all the money in the world. Therefore, I am willing to spend extra money on a cab to minimize the time lost from learning seder.”
 “I admire you, young man.”

The young man settled comfortably into the front seat of the taxi, and took out his watch. The minutes ticked by. As each

minute passed he thought, “There goes another shekel and a half.” Within a few minutes, they arrived at the office. The young man dropped off his paper and returned to the taxi. He sat down, and within no time, they were approaching the Yeshiva. He looked at his watch.

“It’s not yet half an hour. Beautiful!” He watched the clock tick away another minute. “That minute cost me a shekel and a half, he thought. Time is expensive.”

“Here we are, young man.”
 “Thank you very much, sir. You did very well. We made it in half an hour.”

He pulled out 45 shekels and paid the driver. He entered the Yeshiva, sat down in his seat, and began learning.

“That half hour cost me 45 shekels,” he thought. “Sometimes I take a break from learning and it stretches out to half an hour. Would I take such a break if it cost 1½ shekels a minute? Surely not. Yet the Torah learning that I miss during the break is worth much more than all the money in the world. How can I even think about wasting time during learning seder! There are diamonds in the *Beis HaMedrash*.”

Kinderlach . . .
 “If you seek it (Torah) as (if it were silver), if you will search for it as hidden treasures – then you will understand the fear of Hashem, and discover the knowledge of the Almighty” (Mishlei 2:4-5). We know that Torah learning is worth much more than money. However, *Shlomo HaMelech* encourages us to value it as much as money. That is already a *madrayga* (significant spiritual level). Then we will learn. Then our *tzitzis* will remind us of what we learned. Then we will do all of Hashem’s mitzvos.

- Parasha Questions:
- Why did the *meraglim* mention that Amalek lives in the Negev? (Rashi 13:29)
 - How did Moshe and Aharon react to the spies report? (14:5)
 - What did Moshe say that convinced Hashem not to destroy Klal Yisrael? (14:13-16)
 - For whom does Hashem have patience? (Rashi 14:18)
 - How does the *gematria* of *tzitzis* remind us of all of the mitzvos? (Rashi 15:39)
 - Why are the parashios of *tzitzis*, *chilul Shabbos*, and *avodah zara* next to each other? (Rashi 15:41)