

# JEALOUSY AND HONOR-SEEKING DRIVE A PERSON FROM THE WORLD

(BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

It is written, "They were all men, heads of the Children of Israel" (Numbers 13:3). Here Rashi explains, "At that time, they were virtuous." That being said, how could such virtuous men disparage the land of Israel? Is it because the spies wanted to remain as leaders that they tried to prevent the Children of Israel from entering the Holy Land? There is something else that we need to understand. As we know, when the spies were in the camp, they were surrounded by the seven clouds of glory. Therefore how could they not have feared Hashem's anger and dreaded the prospect of Hashem expelling them from the clouds? How could the spies not have feared the Ruach HaKodesh of Moses, who knew that they were lying to the Children of Israel? Above all, we need to ask ourselves why Moses did not add a letter to the names of all the spies, just as he added the letter yud to the name of Joshua, as he prayed for Hashem to protect him from the counsel of the spies (Bamidbar Rabba 16:9), thereby preventing all of them from disparaging the land.

Before explaining all this, let us first ask another question. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Abraham, "Lech lecha [Go for yourself]..." (Genesis 12:1), which Rashi explains as: "Lech lecha. Go for yourself, for your own benefit and your own good." We therefore see that the word lecha signifies "for your own benefit and the good that will ensue." Yet here in Parsha Shelach, on the verse, "Send for yourself [lecha] men" (Numbers 13:2), Rashi cites the Sages as saying: "Send for yourself. According to your own understanding, I am not commanding you, but if you wish, you may send." We may therefore ask how sending the spies was beneficial and good for Moses, since the word lecha implies this. In other words, how would Moses benefit from it? The answer is that Eretz Israel can only be acquired when the Children of Israel are united. When there are divisions and conflicts among the people, the land vomits out its inhabitants, as it is written: "That the land should not vomit you out when you defile it" (Leviticus 18:28). In fact each person disparages the other when divisions exist among the people, resulting in the Temple and the land being destroyed on account of Lashon Harah and baseless hatred (Yoma 9b; Arachin 15b). In the time of Achav, although the people were idolaters (Vayikra Rabba 26:2), they were victorious in war because none of them spoke Lashon Harah or acted as informers. When does Lashon Harah rear its head? When someone has only self-interest at heart, in which case he is bothered by the success of others.

These concepts allow us to better understand the situation with Moses, who served as a symbol and shining example for the Children of Israel on how to rid themselves of all selfish interests. Despite all the great qualities that Moses exhibited before Hashem, he never grew proud. Instead he constantly made everything depend on the merit of the Children of Israel. Furthermore, he was the most humble man on the face of the earth, a paragon of humility and self-effacement, and he never felt offended. Therefore when he was told, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp" (Numbers 11:27) – their prophesy being that "Moses will die and Joshua will bring Israel into the land" (Sanhedrin 17a) – not only did Moses not get angry, he even said: "If only all the people of the L-RD could be prophets" (Numbers 11:29)! In other words: May everyone prophesize, for then I will no longer be needed! Thus we see that Moses was a paragon of humility, and that he always annulled his own personal interests as if they were nothing.

All the Children of Israel could learn from Moses' example in terms of how to act with their fellowman. If someone saw that another person was a sage, or that he was becoming greater, or that he was becoming wealthier, he would annul his own selfish interests and rejoice in the success of that person. Such an attitude protects one from Lashon Harah and all other faults associated with it.

Hence with regards to the spies, we clearly see how Moses elevated himself and sent them lecha – for himself, according to his own understanding – even if he derived no benefit or profit from it, since Moses himself was not to enter Eretz Israel. Furthermore, Hashem promised that the land was

very good, but Moses sent spies according to the desire of the Children of Israel, to show them that even if he had no profit or benefit to gain from it, no personal interest whatsoever, he was still pleased that others were going into Eretz Israel and benefiting from it themselves. Above all, Moses knew that Joshua would bring the people into the land (as Eldad and Medad had prophesied), and he prayed for Hashem to save Joshua because he would be the one to bring the people into the land, and Moses wanted the prophecy to be fulfilled. From here we see the greatness of Moses, who had prayed so greatly to enter Eretz Israel – 515 prayers, according to the numerical value of the term va'etchanan (Devarim Rabba 11:10) – in order to fulfill the mitzvot that are dependant on the land. Yet when Moses realized that he would not enter it, he immediately prayed for the success of Joshua, in order for him to fulfill the prophesy of Eldad and Medad by bringing the people into the land, and for Hashem to protect him from the spies. As for the spies themselves, although they were virtuous and upright at that point in time (since they did not need a letter added to their names), they nevertheless descended from their lofty spiritual level, sinned and were punished as a result. This happened because they did not learn from what Moses had commanded them, and they did not rid themselves of selfish interests. These interests blinded them, and far from seeing the good of the land, they perceived only evil, as it is written: "Envy, lust, and honor-seeking drive a man from the world" (Pirkei Avoth 4:21). Hence they were chased from this world and died. They were not even close to Hashem, for a person who desires honor – even if he is close to Hashem – does not sense His glory.

We find something similar with King Yanai, who killed the Sages of Israel because they did not allow him to wear priestly garments (Kiddushin 66a). He could not abandon his own selfish interests, and the Sages have said: "Do not be sure of yourself until the day you die" (Pirkei Avoth 2:4). In fact Yochanan served as High Priest for 80 years, but in the end he became a Sadducee and perished, for he did not annul his selfish interests. Although he served as High Priest, pride was concealed in him, and he desired nothing but glory. His heart was not right with Hashem, and he became a Sadducee. It is frightening to realize just how far selfish interests and pride can take a person!

The spies, although virtuous and upright, were infused with pride in the depths of their beings. They desired honor and did not annul their self-interests. Hence their sin was revealed and they were punished. Moses therefore prayed for Joshua to be saved by Y-H, since this Name has the same numerical value as ga'avah ("pride"). Moses prayed for Hashem to save Joshua from pride, from self-interest and a love of honor. Now Joshua had no selfish interests, for when Eldad and Medad prophesied, "Moses will die and Joshua will bring Israel into the land," Joshua did not rejoice in being the one to bring the Children of Israel into Eretz Israel. On the contrary, he became angry and said to Moses, "My lord Moses, forbid them!" (Numbers 11:28). He was on Moses' side and had no selfish interests. That being said, we must ask why Moses had to pray for Hashem to protect Joshua, since he was humble. The answer is that a person only knows his true worth when he finds himself in familiar surroundings. In yeshiva, for example, a person benefits from his teacher's good influence. However when he leaves the walls of the yeshiva, he is likely to endure harmful influences from the outside, and he must fight against the evil inclination with his own strength, meaning without the help of his teacher. It was in this way that Moses acted towards his disciple Joshua. As long as he was close to him, Moses knew that Joshua was humble and had no self-interests, since he jealously guarded his teacher's honor. However Moses was afraid that Joshua would be influenced by the spies. As long as they were within the camp of the Shechinah, they were surrounded by the seven clouds of glory and remained upright. However who knew what would happen upon leaving it, for how would they act in that case? Hence it was at that precise moment that Moses prayed for Joshua.



## The Path To Follow SHELACH LECHA

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## GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

### Let Everyone See the Virtues of Others

If we know that someone has said or done something against either Heaven or other people, we must judge what he said or did in a favorable light. If that someone is a G-d fearing person, we are obligated to judge him favorably, even if it appears more likely that he sinned. If that someone is an average individual, one who tries not to sin but sometimes stumbles, we must lean towards judging him favorably. As the Sages have said, "One who judges others favorably, G-d will judge him favorably." This is part of the general principle of, "With righteousness shall you shall judge your fellow" (Leviticus 19:15). Even if it appears more likely that someone has sinned, it is a very good thing if we regard it as a doubt instead of a certainty.

– The Chafetz Chaim

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

## Faith in Hashem

A problem faces everyone who waits for deliverance and tries to infuse his soul with hope and faith. He is seized with hesitation, with the question: “Can I really have faith that Hashem will save me? Do my actions justify such faith and allow me to be optimistic? How and by what merit can I have faith that Hashem will answer my requests, since I’m the only one who truly understands my spiritual state?”

Such hesitation can completely confuse a person. During his most difficult moments, it leads him to oscillate between hope and hopelessness. He wholeheartedly wants to have faith in Hashem, since he knows that he must have faith and it is easier to live with faith. However in the depths of his heart, he hesitates. How is this possible?

Our teacher the Chafetz Chaim gave some advice to those who are confused in this way, delivering them from their distress. He said, “The Holy One, blessed be He, does not watch over man so closely as if to say, ‘I will only save you if you are a tzaddik!’ He simply says, ‘I will not save you if you rebel.’ As long as a person does not rebel by deliberately refusing to perform mitzvot, he can expect good things.”

The origins of this idea appear in our parsha. All the derogatory things that the spies said about Eretz Israel are based on it. They claimed that Eretz Israel was a land in which it was impossible to live without Heaven’s help, and that such help required personal merit. They claimed that the generation of the desert, which had committed the sin of the golden calf, could not allow themselves to base all their faith on the assumption that Hashem would help them to survive in the land, since they had sinned in the desert. Even if they already repented, the spies said, perhaps they did not even have the right to rely on Hashem!

In response to this, Caleb and Joshua told the people: “Just don’t rebel against Hashem! The Holy One, blessed be He, is not so strict with a person as if to say to him: ‘I will only save you if you are a tzaddik!’ Instead He only says, ‘I will not save you if you rebel.’” Thus Caleb and Joshua ended by saying, “Just don’t rebel against Hashem!” As long as a person does not rebel against the Holy One, blessed be He, by deliberately refusing to obey His mitzvot, he can expect good things.

– Shmirat HaLashon, ch. 19

## A Pearl From the Rav: The Importance of Tzitzit

For the mitzvah of tzitzit, the Torah states: “You shall look upon them and remember all the commandments of the L-RD and do them” (Numbers 15:39). We need to understand why these expressions (look, remember, do) are used to describe this mitzvah. Would one of them not have been enough for a person to serve Hashem? Why are they all needed?

Concerning the tzitzit, the Sages have said: “Looking leads to remembering, and remembering leads to doing” (Menachot 43b). Our teacher the Chafetz Chaim, in his commentary on the Torah, states that the mitzvah of tzitzit leads to remembering all the mitzvot, since it has the same numerical value as all the mitzvot. However for a person to reach the level of remembering all the mitzvot when looking at the tzitzit, he must first know all the mitzvot. In that case he will look, remember, and do. However if he does not know them, how can he remember them when looking at the tzitzit?

We must add that if a person has the ability to learn mitzvot, but fails to do so, he is not exempt from the mitzvah of tzitzit on account of not having anything to remember. If he does not know how to study, if he has no one to teach him, or if he puts an effort into learning Hashem’s mitzvot but does not know the entire Torah and the reason behind all of

Hashem’s mitzvot, Hashem will certainly judge him favorably. In His great compassion, Hashem will enable such a person to look upon the tzitzit and remember all the mitzvot, for he yearns to study and learn, and everything that he does is done wholeheartedly.

We must realize that a person should not be ashamed of letting his tzitzit be seen on the outside of his clothing, for they carry Hashem’s Name. This can be compared to a person who receives a gift from the king: He will consider it a great honor to display this gift on the outside of his clothing, thereby showing it to everyone who sees him. How much more does this apply when a person receives a gift from the King of kings! It is not without reason that the Sages said that whoever demonstrates zeal for the mitzvah of tzitzit will merit welcoming the Shechinah, for it is a gift from Hashem.

## The Study of Mussar is Without Equal

*It is written, “Send for yourself men, and let them spy out the land of Canaan” (Numbers 13:2).*

Rashi states, “Why is the section dealing with the spies juxtaposed with the section dealing with Miriam? Because she was punished for matters of slander, for speaking against her brother, and these wicked people saw but did not learn their lesson.” People usually think that if they could only see Hashem’s guiding hand, the way in which He rules the world through reward and punishment, it would motivate them to better themselves. For what reason do people praise a preacher? It is because of the metaphors that he provides, for the way that he makes things real for people, to the point of almost letting them see things with their own eyes. Yet in the case of the spies, “these wicked people saw”! They saw with their own eyes, and yet they still did not change. Why not? It is because they did not learn from what they saw, as the prophet exclaims: “They do not know, and they do not understand, for their eyes are blocked from seeing and their hearts from comprehending” (Isaiah 44:18). There is hearing, and better yet seeing, but all of it is useless unless a person take things to heart.

– Rabbi Meir Chadash

## Adding to the Days of the King

*It is written, “Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun ‘Joshua’” (Numbers 13:16).*

Rashi states, “May G-d save you from the counsel of the spies.” Targum Yonatan links this verse to Joshua’s humility, which is difficult to understand, for what does it have to do with humility?

Actually, why did Moses have to pray for Joshua to be saved from the counsel of the spies, since he was already 40 years old at the time, and the Sages say: “When the majority of a man’s years have passed without sin, he will sin no more” (Yoma 38b)? That being the case, Joshua would not have succumbed to sin. However when Moses saw Joshua’s humility, he was afraid that he would stumble because, as the Sages point out, years are added to the life of a talmid chacham who does not demonstrate obduracy. Hence it was possible that Joshua would live a long time, meaning that the 40 years he already lived did not represent “the majority” of his life. In that case, he was liable to succumb to sin, which is why Moses prayed for him.

– Ohr Chadash, Pesachim

## One Who Flees from Honor

*It is written, “Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun ‘Joshua’” (Numbers 13:16).*

When Moses saw that Joshua became angry with Eldad and Medad when they prophesied, “Moses will die and Joshua will bring Israel into the land,” he realized just how great Joshua’s humility was, since he

fled from honor and did not want to lead the people. Moses was afraid that, because of this humility, Joshua would agree with the spies so the Children of Israel could remain in the desert under Moses' leadership. In that case they would not have to go into Eretz Israel, where Joshua was to lead the people. Moses therefore prayed for Joshua to be saved from the counsel of the spies.

– Avodat Israel

## The Mitzvah of Bikkurim

*It is written, “From there they cut down a vine with a cluster of grapes...pomegranates...figs” (Numbers 13:23).*

Concerning the verse, “Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes” (v.20), the Arizal said that the mitzvah of bikkurim rectifies the sin of the spies. The spies scorned the land, whereas the mitzvah of bikkurim was given out of love for the land. Hence it only applies to the seven kinds of fruit that are the glory of Eretz Israel.

We must note the fact that, regarding how the bikkurim were gathered, the Mishnah states: “A man goes into his field and sees a ripe fig, a ripe cluster of grapes, or a ripe pomegranate. He [then] ties a rope around it and says: ‘Let these be bikkurim’ ” (Bikkurim 3:1). Only three of the seven kinds of fruit are mentioned here, these being the three kinds that the spies returned with from Eretz Israel.

– Rabbi Menachem Zemba

## Because of the Children

*It is written, “Poked the iniquity of fathers upon children” (Numbers 14:18).*

We must understand poked to mean a diminishment, as in the verse: “There lacks [nifkad] not one man among us” (Numbers 31:49). The Holy One, blessed be He, diminishes the iniquity of the fathers because of the children, who atone for the sins of their fathers. Thus we read, “The son grants merit to the father.”

– HaKetav VeHaKabbalah

## Overview of the Parsha

Parsha Shelach Lecha continues with the account of the people's journey as they prepare to enter the land of Israel. This journey began in Parsha Beha'alotcha at the mountain of G-d, and after making stops in Kivrot HaTa'ava and Chazereth, they arrive in the desert of Paran. Spies are sent to explore the land, and they return to the desert without any faith in Hashem. Afterwards, the people are told that they must remain in the desert for 40 more years, during which time the first generation would die. Rebels among the people try to check this disaster by venturing into the land of Israel, but without success. After being estranged from Hashem and the decree of a lengthy desert sojourn, the people receive other mitzvot concerning offerings, as well as the taking of challah and tithes on the harvest. A special offering is also ordered for anyone who inadvertently transgresses mitzvot, and a person who gathered wood on Shabbat is stoned. The people are also commanded to wear tzitzit on the corners of their garments in order to remember all the mitzvot.

# REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

## A Greater Goal

*It is written, “What is the land like: Is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not?” (Numbers 13:20).*

What were the people in the generation of the desert thinking in asking for spies to verify the nature of the land? What can the situation be compared to? It is like someone who is living in a Siberian labor camp, but is about to be set free and transferred to another country. He begins to inquire as to whether the conditions of that particular country are good enough for him. Would such a person not be considered mad, given that he does not jump with joy upon hearing that he will be set free? When the Children of Israel were about to leave the vast and terrible desert to enter an inhabited land, what difference did it make if that land was comfortable enough for them? This was the question raised by the gaon Rabbi Yosef Leib Nandik Zatzal. He answered it as follows:

It is certainly true that if they had sensed the least bit of danger or the difficulty of life in the desert, they would have been overjoyed to leave it, in which case they would have had no reason to verify the nature of the land. Yet these great people – who were delivered from Egypt and brought into the desert, and who were led by Divine providence by miracles and supernatural wonders – did not perceive the desert as a barren wasteland. Instead, they felt that they were living in a royal city under the watchful eye of the King of kings. They understood just how great their merit was and what lofty heights they had attained by being surrounded with the clouds of glory, by eating the bread of the mighty from Heaven, and by drinking water from the well. On the contrary, they feared that all this would be gone once they arrived in the promised land. Hence they felt the need to check whether they would descend from their lofty spiritual level.

This is why Moses told them in the plains of Moab, “All of you approached me and said, ‘Let us send men before us...’ The idea was good in my eyes” (Deuteronomy 1:22-23). Why did this idea seem good to him? It is because their intentions were good, and the foundation and basis of their request was holy.

Yet if this request was so good, why was it considered a sin? Rabbi Yosef Leib explains that they erred in believing that their goal in life was to continue living under the wings of the Shechinah, surrounded by miracles and living on a greater plane. Not so! Man's great role in this world is precisely to reveal Hashem's presence in every material aspect of life, and from there to arrive at great spiritual levels. Doing that – not perceiving Hashem through miracles and wonders – is the most difficult task of all.

# EISHET CHAYIL

## The Mother of the Yeshiva

Mail arrived in the small town of Volozhin two or three times a week. In addition to letters, money also arrived from the families of students learning in the yeshiva. In order to spare them the effort of having to go and pick up the mail themselves, and sometimes to wait there for a long time, Rebbetzin Batya Miriam Berlin, the wife of the Netziv, would go to the post office herself and sign for the students. She would receive the money that was sent to the students and distribute it to them. Nothing could stop her from performing this task, neither rain nor snow, neither fasting nor illness. She would say, “How can I let a ben Torah trouble himself, or how can I delay in going to the post office for another day when he needs money?” When a student fell ill, the Rebbetzin would send him the very best food from her own kitchen, and she and the wives of the other yeshiva directors would often go several times a day to visit the sick and see what they needed. In fact the Rosh Yeshiva himself, the Netziv “immersed in work” (as he signed his name), interrupted his own studies and stopped whatever he was doing in order to go and visit the sick.

– From Volozhin to Jerusalem

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTARAH

### A Successful Emissary Forgoes Personal Interests

*It is written, “Joshua the son of Nun sent from Shittim...” (Joshua 2:1).*

This verse tells us that Joshua sent two men “to spy secretly.” In the Midrash, the Sages say that they were disguised as pottery merchants, which served as their camouflage. The Chiddushei HaRim says that this was not only their camouflage, but served as a reminder of how they must act in order to successfully carry out their mission. As we know, pottery differs from other utensils, be they of metal or glass, in that it has no intrinsic value. Pottery is made from very simple material, from earth, sand, and clay. How important is sand, since it can be found everywhere, such as on the seashore? The only importance of pottery is that it can serve as a vessel to contain food or drink. On the other hand, vessels of metal or glass have intrinsic value. Silver, gold, or copper are precious metals that decorate homes and are used in jewelry.

A successful emissary, says the Chiddushei HaRim, is one who maintains a single and unique goal before his eyes, namely the success of his mission. He harbors no personal ambitions, nor does he seek profit or honor in carrying out the task at hand. He wants to do only one thing: The will of the one who sent him. In this way he is like pottery, for he renounces his own importance and completely devotes himself to becoming a vessel to fulfill the goal of the one who sent him. Such an emissary will succeed.

## A TRUE STORY

### Is it Really Better to be a Sheep?

*It is written, “The men who spread the evil report about the land died” (Numbers 14:17).*

Living in Jerusalem was a tzaddik by the name of Rabbi Dov Sokolovsky Zatzal. He recounted a terrifying story that he remembered from his childhood in the Polish town of Mir, about a hundred years ago. There was a wealthy man there who studied Torah, observed mitzvot, and conducted himself honorably. At a certain point in his life, he decided to sell all that he had and move to Eretz Israel. He therefore sold his home and his goods, collected the money, and said an emotional farewell to the residents of town. Everyone came to honor him, for he was going to fulfill the mitzvah of dwelling in Eretz Israel, the land that every Jew in the Diaspora dreams of. Everyone left him with tear-filled eyes, saying to him: “Next year in rebuilt Jerusalem!”

However when he arrived in Israel (at a time when there was no organized Jewish community there), he realized that everyone was poor and living under very difficult conditions. He found it hard to go from a life of wealth to one of poverty, which was too difficult for him. He eventually left by the same way he came, returning to his town in Poland.

Upon his return to Mir, all the residents went out to meet him. However he spoke disparagingly of the land and described it in harsh terms: “It’s so difficult to live in Eretz Israel that sheep in Mir live better than people in Eretz Israel. Better to be a sheep living outside of Eretz Israel than a man in Eretz Israel.”

These words had barely left his mouth when a terrible thing happened, for he suffered a stroke that left him paralyzed. He fell to his hands and feet, just like a sheep, and was unable to speak. In fact he could only utter incoherent sounds that resembled the bleating of sheep!

## THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

### A Lack of Respect

The Sages say, “Rabbi Akiva had 12,000 pairs of disciples, from Gabbatha to Antipatris, and all of them died at the same time because they did not treat each other with respect. The world remained devoid [of Torah] until Rabbi Akiva came to our masters in the south and taught Torah to them. These were Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Yossi, Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Eleazar ben Shammua. It was they who revived the Torah at that time. A Tanna taught: ‘All of them died between Passover and Shavuot.’ Rabbi Chama bar Abba, or it may have been Rabbi Chiya bar Abin, said: ‘All of them died a cruel death.’ What was it? Rabbi Nachman replied, ‘Diphtheria’ [an illness that starts in the intestines and ends in the throat]” (Yebamot 62b).

Rabbi Akiva said to his disciples, “My sons, the previous ones died only because they resented one another. Make sure that you do not act like this.” Hence they arose and filled all of Eretz Israel with Torah (Bereshith Rabba 61:3; Kohelet Rabba 11:10).

We note that the Holy One, blessed be He, saved two great nations, Ammon and Moab, from destruction because of two doves that would emerge from them: Ruth the Moabitess and Naamah the Ammonitess (Bava Kama 38b). How could it be that Hashem tolerated such depraved nations, and yet among all the disciples of Rabbi Akiva, none were worth saving? These were men who could have spread the Torah in Eretz Israel!

This teaches us that a failure to respect other people leads to such deep-seated and mind-numbing depravity that there is almost no chance that something good will come of it. Therefore as long as a talmid chacham, be he the greatest among them, does not treat others with respect and fails to pay attention to not harming them, it is better for the world to be devoid of Torah! The disciples of Rabbi Akiva were responsible for their fate, since they did not learn from their teacher, who said upon being imprisoned: “Better that I myself should die, than to transgress the words of my colleagues” (Eruvin 21b).

– Chayei HaMussar

## YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

### Rabbi Shemuel Laniado

Rabbi Shemuel Laniado Zatzal lived in Italy about 400 years ago. He was the close disciple of our teacher Rabbi Yosef Karo, the author of Beit Yosef. He was also known as the “Ba’al HaKelim,” after the name of his books, all of which carried the term Kli in their titles: Kli Yakar, Kli Chemda, and Kli Paz.

Rabbi Shemuel’s teacher, the Beit Yosef, tremendously respected and loved him, and he sent him to Aleppo, Syria in order to serve as its rav. Thus Rabbi Shemuel Laniado boarded a boat headed for that country. A wealthy merchant was traveling with him, transporting many containers (kelim) filled with fish, cargo that he carefully guarded. In the middle of the journey, this fish merchant suddenly died, leaving behind his containers filled with fish. At first the captain thought of throwing the fish back into the sea, for what else could he do with them, and who would want such a load of fish? After all, he wasn’t a fish merchant! However he decided to make some money, and he offered to sell them at a laughable price. Nobody wanted to buy them, but Rabbi Shemuel Laniado was grateful to the captain and decided to pay for them. The other people traveling aboard the boat were surprised by this act, but paid no attention to it. He purchased the fish and returned to learning Torah. Because of his deep concentration, he did not check to see what was at the bottom of the containers until he reached land. When he got off the boat, he glanced at the containers and was taken aback by what he saw: There was fish only in the upper layers of the containers, and beneath them were thousands of precious stones! Hence Rabbi Shemuel Laniado arrived in Aleppo with a huge fortune. In memory of the kindness that Hashem had shown him, he used the term Kli in the title of all his books.