

From the desk of Rabbi Baumann



SUMMER IS FOR GROWING

Dear Parents,

Erev Shabbos Parashas Shelach 5781

One of the most perplexing questions about the *Meraglim*, the spies, who are the focus of this week's *Parsha*, is how they could have so strikingly misinterpreted what they were observing around them. They saw numerous funerals and rather than appreciating how *Hashem* was diverting the local populace's attention away from them, the spies saw a land that devoured its citizens (*Bamidbar*, 13:32 *Rashi*). They saw giants and rather than giving credit to the land for nurturing such healthy, strong individuals, they assumed the land was so toxic, that only the very strong could survive (*Seforo*).

... how (they) could {the Meraglim} have so strikingly misinterpreted what they were observing around them."

The *Meraglim* went on to state that because of the giants (13:33) they felt like grasshoppers in their own eyes and projected that was how the Canaanites perceived them. The *Midrash* (*Medrash Rabbah* 16:11) explains that *Hashem* said that while it's understandable that is how they felt, it is not acceptable to assume others see you that way. It shows a lack of *Bitachon*, faith in *Hashem*. G-d intervenes as necessary and could undoubtedly put fear of *Bnei Yisrael* in the hearts of the *Canaanim*. This lack of *Bitachon* caused a loss of self-esteem, and a distorted impression of how others viewed them. When a person thinks little of himself, he can't perceive that others don't also see him in that light. The reality for everyone else might be that he's a great person, but the person himself will never see it.

True self-esteem is the essence of a successful person. Those who are involved in activities that they are good at will have enhanced self-worth, while those who are occupied with endeavors that they are either weak in or disinterested in will feel worse about themselves. A highly educated immigrant who is forced to become an Uber driver to make ends meet must constantly struggle with maintaining a healthy self-esteem when day after day he's involved in work he

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What about our children? If their school year was filled with daily academic and social successes, they've got to be feeling good about themselves. What about those who struggle? It is imperative that every child have an area of life in which they excel.

Ultimately, it becomes the parent's primary responsibility to find that skill or talent, nurture it and help it blossom. What better time is there to accomplish this than summer vacation?

The possibilities are endless. Your child may have latent talent in music, art, dance or a particular sport. Perhaps it's in cooking, baking, woodworking, sculpting, or sewing. It might be computers, robotics or graphics. He or she might gravitate to helping people, to being very organized or be good at languages. The non-academic avenues in which your child might be outstanding are too numerous to mention. And they have great value.

As the summer approaches, look for summer classes, team up with a talented friend or neighbor who can give lessons or even better – reignite an old underdeveloped passion from your past and pursue it together with your child.

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The summertime is a golden opportunity to unlock the treasure inside your child. Real self-esteem comes from a healthy self-appreciation of something the person does very well. Enjoy your children, bond with them and work on developing the wonderful *Neshama* that lies inside each precious child.

Best wishes for a relaxing, rejuvenating and fulfilling *Shabbos*. May the final weeks of school help launch a summer filled with memorable times and true growth for your children.



Rabbi Kalman Baumann