

Self-Esteem

Why do Jewish people suffer from a collective lack of self-esteem? The world as a whole lacks self esteem. Everywhere you look, you see people buying self-help books. But the source of low self esteem is the Jewish People. The spies come back from Eretz Yisrael and they give a report that they saw giants and they were as grasshoppers in front of the giants, both in their own eyes and in the giant's eyes. Rav Soloveitchik asks, how do they know that the giants thought they were grasshoppers? Rashi says that they compared them to ants and not grasshoppers. But how could Rashi be arguing on the passuk? This is teaching us, do you know the danger of low self-esteem? If you see yourself as a grasshopper, that's exactly how others will see you. Do you think that low self-esteem stays the same? It's a downward spiral. It's only a matter of time that you are like ants. The Jews buy into the lies of the spies. They stayed up all night and cried and it was that day that all tragedies happened to the Jews.-Tisha B'Av. That is the day that both Beis Hamikdashim were destroyed. All because we believed the spies. What was the punishment of the spies? They died in the desert. If you believe you're not on the level to enter Eretz Yisrael, that becomes your reality and you're going to die before you get there. The entire period of the midbar is like a woman going through pregnancy. Everything that happens during the pregnancy can effect the child- the woman can't drink, smoke, etc. On that night that we cried, that became the sickness of the Jewish People.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin say when G-d created the animals, he created many of them. But man, he created alone. Why? Adam Harishon realized that everything was created for him. Someone who dies, it's like we lost an entire world. That's why we sit shiva 7 days. You save one life, it's like you save the entire world. When a Jewish man marries a Non-Jewish woman and has 2.2 children, after 20 generations, that's 7 million children! There is a gemara in Sukkah that says that Hillel Hazakain, when he would party on Simchas Beis Hashoeva, he would say "If I'm not here, no one's here". Sometimes we ask ourselves, when we are going to some sort of large gathering, does it really matter that I'm here? I'm just one of many! Of course it matters if you are there. "A tzaddik falls 7 times". Rav Hutner says that it's the falling that makes a tzaddik. Everyone falls.

Rav Tzaddok says, just like a person believes in G-d, he needs to believe in himself. The Torah believes in you! Rav Berel Wein was davening at the shul of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. There were 9 people there, 1 short of a minyan. The greatest sage was sitting there and there's no minyan?! Why can't you count him twice, he knows as much as 500 Jews! They pulled in some Jewish cleaner off the street. No matter how great you are, you are still one. No matter how low you are, you are still one. How do we know that we have to die for avodah zara, gilui arayot and shfichot damim? We know avodah zara and gilui arayot but how do we know shfichot damim? You never know, who says you are greater in G-d's eyes than the other person. The greatest gadol is obligated to die in your place! Every single person has the ability and potential to become like Moshe Rabbeinu. The Bnei Yissachar says a few good deeds we do today, a few good actions a person does in these times is more than a lot of the tanaim did. We have to believe in

ourselves. We are sons of the king. We have much more to be proud of than other nations.

In the years of the shah, the Iranians had a choice-not to see you parents and learn torah (go to America)or stay in Iran and not learn Torah. So there was a certain boy who left his parents in Iran and came to Ner Yisrael to study there. He had a chavrusa with one of the students there, and the chavrusa was wondering why they boy had a patch over one of his eyes. One day, he had enough courage to ask the boy. The boy told him that in Iran, a boy who becomes bar-mitzvah needs to recite all of tehillim by heart in front of all the elders. So a couple days before his bar-mitzvah, he was studying in his school when it become late. The only way to get home was to go through a huge park, about a 25 minute walk. But in those days, Jews we're not allowed to be in parks after sun-down. So he starts walking home in this big park. All of a sudden, he needs to go to the bathroom, he figures if he runs home he could get there in 10 minutes maybe. So he starts running. All of a sudden, he hears a guard calling out to him to stop. He started running faster and faster. All of a sudden the guard shoots at him, and he falls on the floor (goes to the bathroom on himself). They throws him in jail. So when he is in jail, he covers his eyes and says the shema. When he's done, the soldier asked him what he was doing and he tells him. The soldier takes a rusty nail and puts it in the boys eye! That is why he has a patch over it. His chavrusa asks him "why did you say the shema if you knew you were in danger?" He starts screaming at him, "a Jew is the son of a king." Was it worth it? Of course it was! You're an apikores! A Jew is the son of the king. After that, the boy wouldn't talk to him. Just like you have a mitzva to believe in G-d, it's a mitzva to believe in yourself.