

# A POWERFUL MESSAGE ABOUT OUR POWER!

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

Moshe sent them to scout the Land of Canaan, and he said to them, "Go up this way in the south and climb up the mountain. You shall see what [kind of] land it is, and the people who inhabit it; are they strong or weak? Are there few or many? And what of the land they inhabit? Is it good or bad? And what of the cities in which they reside are they in camps or in fortresses? What is the soil like? Is it fat or lean? Are there any trees in it or not? You shall be courageous and take from the fruit of the land." It was the season when the first grapes begin to ripen. (Bamidbar 13:17-20)

Are they strong or weak? : He gave them a sign. If they live in open cities [it is a sign that] they are strong, since they rely on their might. And if they live in fortified cities [it is a sign that] they are weak. [Tanchuma 6] (Rashi)

This Rashi is rather counter intuitive! We would think things should be just the other way around. If they are in walled cities they are secure and if they are in open encampments they are vulnerable and weak! What's origin of this notion? What's the relevance?

When peaking back at the earliest moments of human history we find a curious phenomenon. What was the first recorded human invention? Take a few moments to think before answering. Some will guess fire but that's not explicitly related. Well surprisingly it's clothing, albeit primitive and minimal. Adam and Chava felt the need to cover-up with a fig leaf after they ingested the forbidden fruit because their innocence was now lost. Prior to that moment they were naked and without any shameful or selfish tendencies. Now, however, afterwards, because of an inner weakness, a moral failing they needed to shield themselves from themselves.

We live nowadays with a gross misconception- that because of the rise of technology we are somehow superior to prior generations. We are learning here that this is far from the truth. When we behold someone with a hearing aid we are not likely to be inspired to jealousy. He needs a device on the outside because his hearing has become diminished.

Somebody in need of a walker or wheelchair can be envious of those of us that can still ambulate without assistance. When we see that person in a hospital room is hooked up with tubes and wires galore it is a clear sign that the inner tubing system is currently malfunctioning. The more hardware required on the outside - the weaker the inner world!

The Czech Poet-President, Vaclav Havel made the following bold and keen observation: "The dizzying development of this science, with its unconditional faith in objective reality and its complete

dependency on general and rationally knowable laws, led to the birth of modern technological civilization. It is the first civilization in the history of the human race that spans the entire globe and firmly binds together all human societies, submitting them to a common global destiny. It was this science that enabled man, for the first time, to see Earth from space with his own eyes; that is, to see it as another star in the sky.

At the same time, however, the relationship to the world that the modern science fostered and shaped now appears to have exhausted its potential. It is increasingly clear that, strangely, the relationship is missing something. It fails to connect with the most intrinsic nature of reality and with natural human experience...It produces what amounts to a state of schizophrenia: Man as an observer is becoming completely alienated from himself as a being...

Today for instance we may know immeasurably more about the universe than our ancestors did, and yet, it increasingly seems they knew something more essential about it than we do, something that escapes us."

I recently came across a charming but alarming cartoon with two distinct images! One depicts a cluster of people madly yapping on cell phones, texting, net surfing, you name it! The other portrays a group of regular folks but relaxed with smiles on their faces. The caption reads: "World Population is Now Divided into Two Distinct Groups; 'Communication Addiction Victims' and 'People!'" **A powerful message about our power!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](http://Torah.org).