

*Beyond Twelve Gates by Rabbi Ze'ev Smason*  
*Parshas Shelach June 13, 2014*

*Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates*

Moshe Stein is a nice Jewish boy -- who kills bugs. Working the predominantly Orthodox neighborhoods of Manhattan Beach, Flatbush, Midwood and Boro Park, Moshe is unfailingly polite to clients, while squishing and trapping various forms of creepy crawlers and pests. "I personally believe you have to be nice, soft-spoken, because the bottom line is, you are dealing a lot with housewives," Moshe said. "You have to have that sensitive touch."

Stein's clients are overwhelmingly Orthodox Jewish homeowners or apartment building landlords. He's part of a growing number of Orthodox exterminators sensing a business opportunity in a swelling population in New York City. He believes that trust is one of the most important factors for a successful pest control business. And Orthodox Jews are more trusting of an Orthodox exterminator. "We say that all of us met at Mount Sinai," Stein said. "We already met once. I think there's that comfort."

Moshe wears a black yarmulke, tzitzit, and has a loaded bait gun slung around his waist. He says that the Torah warns against causing unnecessary pain and suffering to an animal. "If the Torah cares about how [animals] feel, then I definitely have to care about how they feel," he said. Much of Moshe's job is about deterring and killing pests. But there's a good bit of rescue and rehabilitation work, too. Over the years, Moshe has retrieved raccoons, opossums, woodchucks and squirrels.

Moshe Stein's business is called *NJB Pest Control*. *NJB* stands for "Nice Jewish Boy." Moshe says, "Listen, I am a nice Jewish boy and I kill bugs. That's what I do."

*Parshas Shelach Numbers 13:1 - 15:41*

Moses is pressed by the Jewish people to send twelve spies to the Land of Canaan (later to be called the Land of Israel). Forty days later they return carrying a gigantic cluster of grapes and two other large fruits. Ten of the spies warn that the inhabitants of the land are enormous in size and that the land 'consumes its inhabitants'. They convince the people that the land can't be conquered. Caleb and Joshua retain their faith in G-d, insisting that the Jewish people can, indeed, conquer the land.

The people weep and proclaim that they'd rather return to Egypt. This tenth expression of a profound lack of faith in G-d prompts a Divine decree that entry into the Land should be delayed forty years. This decree was made on the ninth of the Hebrew month of Av -- known as Tisha B'Av. Numerous other tragedies occurred on Tisha B'Av, including the destruction of the first and second Temples and the expulsion of Spanish Jewry in 1492.

Parshas Shelach concludes with the command to place fringes (tzitzis) on the corners of a four-cornered garment. Tzitzis help us to remember to fulfill all of the Divine commandments. This reminds me of the story of the rabbi who asked his synagogue's Board of Directors if they would supply him with a new talis once every six months. They told him, "We're sorry, Rabbi. We can't afford the fringe benefits."

*Rabbinic Ruminations*

Body language speaks loud and clear. A recent study shows that we can tell if an athlete is winning or losing a game just by observing their posture, their hands and their expressions. Participants in the study were shown a series of silent three-second clips of athletes playing table tennis, basketball and handball. They were asked to guess whether the athlete was winning or losing and by how much. Even children as young as four years old were able to differentiate between leading and trailing athletes in individual and team sports.

Body language isn't just relevant in sports. Amy Cuddy, a social psychologist and professor at Harvard, researches non-verbal communication in other settings. Her findings suggest that body language can influence how we think, feel and behave. Her latest research illuminates how "faking" body postures that

convey competence and power ("power posing") – even for as little as two minutes -- changes our testosterone and cortisol levels, increases our appetite for risk, causes us to perform better in job interviews, and generally configures our brains to cope well in stressful situations. Psychologist William James always stressed the importance of action over emotion and recognized how behavior influences our thoughts -- and ultimately, our emotions.

Classic Jewish literature predates by centuries the ideas of Cuddy and James. The *Sefer HaChinuch*, ("The Book of Instruction") a 13th-century work on the 613 Commandments, writes: "*A person is changed by his actions*" (*Mitzvah 16*). *We become the way we behave -- not immediately, but slowly, as the years progress and as our behavior becomes ingrained.*" Act the way you want to feel: Our body language affects our emotions.

### *Quote of the Week*

Television won't last because people will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night.  
-- *Daryl Zanuck, movie producer, 20th Century Fox, 1946*

### **Joke of the Week**

A rabbi meets a couple and asks them how many children they have.

"Sadly we are not blessed with any children yet."

"Let me write down your names and place a note in the Kotel (Western Wall) for a blessing."

Five years later he meets the woman again and asks,

"So how is the family?"

"Well rabbi, we've been blessed with 13 children; two sets of twins and three sets of triplets."

"Amazing! I would like to congratulate your husband. Where is he?"

"He is in Israel." She replies

"What is he doing there?"

"Trying to find that note you placed in the wall!"