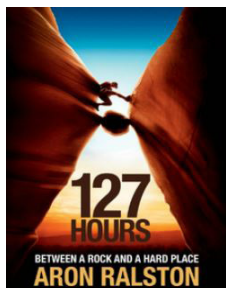


**STORY**

**The Heavy Rock of Isolation**



The book "127 hours" is the riveting story of American mountain climber, Aron Ralston, whose ordeal gripped the nation in May 2003 when he was forced to cut off his arm in order to survive his adventure. The book is fascinating, mesmerizing and very real. And all too human. I think we all recognize that Aron Ralston could be any one of us.

When Mr. Ralston set out on his adventure to climb Blue John Mountain in Utah, he didn't tell anyone where he was going. His mother called and he ignored her message. He lived a life isolated from others, pushing people away, avoiding intimacy.

When his arm gets stuck "between a rock and a hard place" (the title of his book and possibly the first time that expression was meant literally), he tries many different maneuvers in an effort to free himself - all without success. After a few days of fruitless attempts, the situation gets more desperate and he begins to reflect, "I'm such a big hero that I came out here and I didn't tell anybody where I was going. Oops."

Ralston is beginning to recognize this, to acknowledge that his isolationism is not a healthy attitude - neither physically nor psychologically. He continues, "All my life I've been heading for this rock. And this rock was made just for me." As the ordeal continues, Ralston becomes delirious. Death seems to be hovering. In a true act of desperation, he takes a knife, already dulled from repeated

banging on the rock, and cuts off his arm.

He still needs to scale down the mountain and hike 16 miles... But as he walks away from the scene, he looks back at the mountain and says, "Thank you."

We are given no further explanation, but since the mountain endangered his life rather than saving it, we must assume he means "thank you for the experience, for the wisdom gained, the lesson proffered."

In Psalms (118), we say: "I will thank You because You have answered me; it has been for me a salvation." The word "answered" can also be translated "afflicted". We thank the Almighty for the affliction because that was the opportunity that truly changed who we are, that (hopefully) made us better.

Aron Ralston is a fortunate young man - not just because he survived, but because he recognized the lessons available for him to learn from this experience while he still had the time and ability to change. Although he continues to climb mountains, he also works as a motivational speaker, doing the best possible thing we can do with our precious bought wisdom - sharing it with others... and he never goes mountain climbing without telling someone where he is going.

We are all climbing a mountain in our struggle with the Yetzer Hara. Don't try to be a "Hero" by hiding your struggle from those who can help you. Chazal say, "a prisoner can't release himself from prison". Start with the GuardYourEyes website and forums, learn to reach out to others and share your struggle. Together our strength is multiplied!

**SMILE!**

**IT'S CONTAGIOUS**



The new Rabbi was in the middle of a sermon when he suddenly beckoned to the gabai (shul assistant) to come over. The Rabbi said to him, "That man in the third row is asleep. Wake him up." The gabai replied, "You put him to sleep. You wake him up."



This woman calls her husband at work and says "I have good news and bad news.... So he says to her: "I'm really sorry dear, but I'm very busy at the moment; I don't have much time to talk... Just give me the good news." "Well," she says, "the airbags work!"



"What is the difference between ignorance and apathy?" a man asked his friend. "I don't know and I don't care," was his response.



Overheard in Boro Park: Sheriff: "Sir I'm going to have to fine you for having your store open." Man: "I'm not the owner, I'm just here looting." Sheriff: "Ahh! OK, then enjoy!"



## Kol Hagadol Mechaveiro



It is brought down in many places, especially in the chassidish sefarim, that a person needs friends to help him in avodas Hashem.

Chazal say: כל הגדול מחבירו יצרו גדול ממנו.

The Beis Aharon of Karlin (Yartzeit was this week, 17 Sivan) read this in the following way:

כל הגדול - מחבירו - Whoever is great, it's from his friend/s.

ממנו - יצרו גדול - If his Yetzer is big, it's from him.

In other words, when one remains isolated and not connected with friends who can help him in avodas Hashem, his Yetzer Hara will be much bigger.

So make sure to find a good friend you can be open with about your struggles, and use the power of GYE's forums, chat-rooms and phone conferences to reach out to others who can give you chizuk!

## Beha'aloscha: Man's Search for Meaning



By Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski

The Torah relates that the people (ha'am) were as if in mourning (Numbers 11:1), but does not say what they were displeased about.

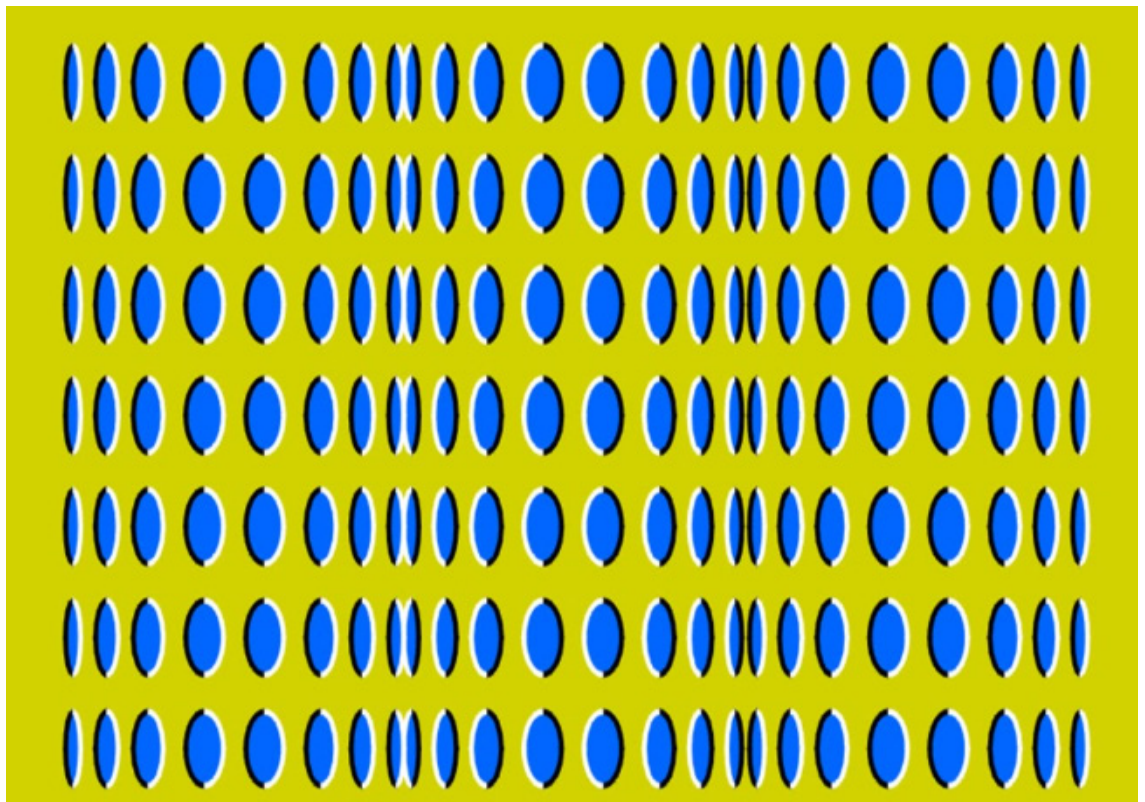
The commentaries say that these people (ha'am) were the Egyptians that joined the Israelites in the exodus. They were trouble makers all along. They were the ones that made the Golden Calf, challenged G-d to produce water in the desert, and advocated return to Egypt. Now they were just griping for no apparent reason. They were unhappy with the Torah, and had no ultimate goal in life.

If a person does not know what one is living for, one will be chronically discontented, and will look for things to blame for the discontent. Such people are likely to turn to any of the addictions, which can give them momentary "highs," which will only add to their long-term misery.

## Desires are an Illusion

### Do you see the turning columns?

Our eyes are a tremendous blessing that allow us to perceive the world around us. However our eyes can trick us as well, making us believe that we need things that in reality it may be very bad for us. Let's train ourselves to use our eyes for good and not let them trick us to turn after our hearts



## The Ever New in the Never Old



HASHEM said to Moshe saying, "Speak to Aaron and say to him: When you "light-up" the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps cast light." Aaron did so- (Bamidbar 8:1-2)

Aaron did so: To teach you the praise of Aaron that he did not change. (Rashi)

What's so great that Aaron lit the lights? Anybody could do that! Why would he do differently than what he understood with perfect clarity G-d had told him to do? So what's the great praise for?

The Sefas Emes offers an answer that not only did Aaron not deviate in the behavior of lighting the first time but for all forty years in the desert he maintained the same high degree of intensity and excitement as if it was the first time. Even though people are naturally dulled by repetitive actions and driven to search for something fresh the "first time" is the choicest of them in terms of pure passion!

The \$64,000 question is, "How do we bottle the enthusiasm of that "first time"? **How does one always enjoy the old and not be tempted to constantly search for new stimulation?**

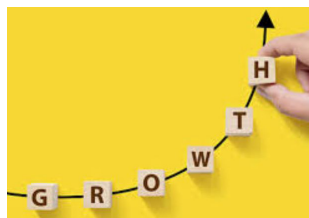
A joke is told about a general that heard his troops were grumbling and complaining and it disturbed him even more when he discovered that they were upset about the food! He assembled his men and gave them a piece of his mind. Drawing on his knowledge of the history of war, he asked rhetorically, "Do you think Napoleon's men at the Waterloo complained about the bread being stale!?" Just then one of the soldiers interjected, "No sir! It was fresh then!"

How does one retain freshness of that which is no longer "new"? Our national commitment to Torah was 3324 years ago and privately at the time of our Bar Mitzvah and so it is with a marriage! What's the secret? The answer is that there is no such thing as "old" in the world of the spirit! We recite twice daily, "Who renews continually with His kindness the action of creation." Everything is actually new!

Reb Aryeh Levin ztl. of "A Tzadik in Our Time" fame was observed gazing at a flickering flame! When what he was doing, he replied joyfully, "I'm drinking in the light!" "Simple" things do not lose their luster to spiritually sensitive individuals! The candle is casting off fresh light each moment! A glass of water can be

more enjoyable to a tuned-in person than a can of coke to the man on the street! King Solomon says, "The person with a good heart is always drinking!" His good thoughts lead him to become intoxicated by any and all aspects of life! The "old" is as fresh as a "first time"! One need only to go up to the light- like Aaron!

## Day by Day



Beha'aloscha starts with the commandment to Aharon to light the Menorah. We all know the famous Rashi, why is this Parsha of Menora near the Parsha of the Nesi'im. Aharon was saddened that Shevet Levi was not part of the grand pageant that was the

Chanuchas Hamizbeach. So Hashem tells Moshe to tell Aharon that his work is greater than theirs since he gets to light the Menorah every day.

What the Nesi'im did was great. It was a huge show. Every day for 12 days they come in with their silver, gold, 21 animals for sacrifice, incense, and meal offering. I am sure there was much fanfare and everyone in Klal Yisroel was super excited and juiced up. They were probably telling themselves about all the great things that they were going to do. But we all know how these super glowing feelings fade. One day turns into the next and then the next, and you miss a day and a week and you fall behind and say well why am I doing this? Oh, I'll just do that tomorrow, one slip won't kill me.

Contrast with Aharon's task. It was a relatively simple one. It was witnessed by few, there was no fanfare, just everyday going and lighting of the menorah. But it was EVERYDAY. He could not miss even one day. **This is the way to real growth, small steps every day.** No excuses why today is no good. No saying I'll just do it tomorrow. Take the steady consistent path every day. So while what the Nesi'im did was amazing, what Aharon was tasked to do was even greater.

**FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE WITH SHMIRAS EINAYIM. NOW IS HARDER THAN EVER!**

Being confined to home without work, feeling anxious and stressed, as well as constantly checking our computers and phones, are breeding grounds for the Yetzer Hara.

**GUARD YOUR EYES!**

Sign-Up to GYE's *Viral Chizuk* during these trying times by email and Whatsapp:

**GUARDYOUREYES.COM**

## Don't always "do"; just "be."



Parshas Beha'aloscha describes in great detail how, when the cloud lifted, the Jews would journey, and, when it came down, they would camp. It repeats this again and again. The Nesivos Shalom learns from this a lesson in *avodas Hashem*:

There are times in our lives, when the cloud is up - when there is light and things are clear and inspiring. We feel motivated and inspired to achieve and to grow. And then, there are times of darkness, when we are confused, uninspired, and stuck in a rut. We don't feel like doing anything!

The Slonimer Rebbe explains that the description of the clouds lifting and coming down shows us that when we are in those moments of light and clarity, that's when we should move! That's when we take on new things and push ourselves to achieve. But when the cloud is covering us, we stop. We camp. It's not the time to move, it's the time to maintain. We have to simply maintain what we have been doing, what we have been working on, and not worry that we are not moving and growing - because this is the avoda that Hashem wants from us at this time, and our work is to simply keep doing what we have been doing. We know that at some point, whether in 3 days or 50, Hashem will lift the cloud again, and we will be in a stage of light. Both times are a form of *avodas Hashem*, and the Torah is instructing us which avoda is needed at which times in our lives.

At *Matan Torah* - time of the greatest inspiration - Hashem came down in a cloud. He was showing that there will be times that this inspiration is not going to be so strong but He wants us to remember that He is still with us, even in darkness, and this, too, is *avodas Hashem*. It's from Him! He places us where we are meant to be at every stage in our lives and directs us what to do within that. (נתיבות שלום)

## The Tattoo of Addiction



Recently, when I was in the mikveh, I noticed another Yid, an ehrlich chasidische married fellow, who, to my great surprise, had tattoos on his body, not something I would have ever known in my encounters with him outside the mikveh, clearly.

Now, I had known this fellow was a *baal-teshuva*, but seeing the tattoos sort of jolted me, but then I told myself it's obvious he did this before he was even frum, a *tinok shenishba*, and instead of being stunned it was then I began to appreciate the greatness of this fellow.....

It would seem that the tattoos will always be there on his body, though it has absolutely no bearing on him now or who he is today. He doesn't need to feel like he has to cover his entire body until the actual immersion in the mikveh so no one will see it, because he is confident and knows he was a different person when he had that done, even though to the physical eye it seems the tattoos are very much part of him since they're on his body.

I was thinking this might apply to us. The *aveiros* we have done will always be there in the distance, but they do NOT define us even remotely, for in our essence, we have a Godly soul, a *cheilek Eloka!* We were different people when we did that stuff, because that's not really us.

## INSPIRATIONAL IMAGE OF THE WEEK

