

Bnei Yisrael did so; they expelled them to the outskirts of the camps, as Hashem had spoken to Moshe. (5:4)

The *Sifsei Kohen* views this *pasuk* as an enormous accolade regarding the character of *Klal Yisrael*. The nation sent out from their camps only those individuals who were so enjoined by Hashem. The *zav* was sent out only from two camps: *Shechinah* and *Leviah*. *Machane Yisrael* welcomed both him and the *metzora*, despite the nature of their diseases. They did only what Hashem had asked of them – and no more. They could easily have said, “Why should we allow the *zav* and *metzora* – individuals whose illnesses are repulsive in nature and who are ritually contaminated – to remain in our camp? Why should we expose our families to them?” They did not, because they cared; they empathized; they were *Yidden*.

Let us see how this attitude plays out in the afterlife, when our *neshamah*, soul, ascends to its rightful place, but must first present itself before the Heavenly Tribunal before it may enter (the cosmic imagery is rendered in *Nitzotzos*).

Nachum was a simple, decent Jew, a carpenter by trade. He earned a simple living, paid his bills and had very little to do with anyone. In fact, for all intents and purposes, Nachum viewed himself as a *lo klumnick*, a nothing, who had no effect on anyone. He sat in the back of the *shul* in a nondescript area. He garnered no attention to himself, because, after all, he was a *lo klumnick*. (Sadly, we all know somebody who views himself this way.)

Nachum’s earthly journey came to an end, and he was summoned to the World of Truth, where the true essence of an individual is illuminated. As his soul was drawing closer to the gates of *Gan Eden*, he saw throngs of Angels standing at attention to accompany him to his ultimate place. He questioned this, “Why would such a crowd of Angels gather for a *lo klumnick* like me?”

The Tribunal began to play a “film” of his life. In the images before him, he observed himself entering the *makolet*, grocery store, early in the morning and bidding “*Boker tov*, good morning!” with a smile to the proprietor. The film demonstrated the positive effect of that smile. The storekeeper worked hard all day, with little appreciation for his toil. People rarely found time to compliment him, but Heaven help him if something was not perfect. As a natural reaction, the storekeeper was rarely in a good mood. All day, he was compelled to listen to the harangues of those who felt they must release their pent-up anxieties and tension on someone – and who was a better candidate than the storekeeper?

But Nachum’s smile at the beginning of the day warmed the storekeeper’s heart and allowed him to be tolerant of every malcontent that “graced” his threshold. As a result, the people discovered that the storekeeper did not react negatively to their diatribes. He smiled back. A smile can be infectious, and so it was. Nachum smiled – the storekeeper smiled – the customers smiled! This continued on all day – everyday, all because Nachum, the *lo klumnick*, started a positive chain

reaction of smiles! The Tribunal turned to Nachum and asked, “Do you still think that you are a *lo klumnick?*”

The change was brought on by a smile. He smiled, despite circumstances that were not always favorable. He did not permit the situation to determine his smile. His smile defined the situation.