



# Ohr Somayach Light Lines

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## Light Insight *Headlights On*

*(Moses said to G-d) "Show me Your Glory..."  
(G-d said to him) "You will see My back, but  
My face cannot be seen." (Exodus 33:18,23)*

**H**ave you ever driven down a country road on a moonless night and turned your headlights off? I wouldn't advise you do it for more than a second because it's like driving into nothingness. It's amazing how those two small pencil-beams of light allow you to navigate a tortuous county road, even in the blackest night. "Why can't they just make this road straight?" you might think to yourself.

This world is like night. The world-to-come is like day.

It's possible to see at night, if you turn on your headlights, but there's a difference: At night, your vision is restricted to what's illuminated in the beams. It's local. By day, you can see the whole picture.

In daylight it becomes clear why the road twists

and turns so much, why sometimes you go up, and sometimes down: Over here, there's a hill; there, a river; over there a valley. Similarly, in the world-to-come everything will be as clear as day. We will see the whole picture. We will be able to understand the reasons why G-d does what He does: Why the road has to have this bend, why our lives had to take this turn or that.

In this world, a person sees only what is illuminated through a thin beam of light. He catches a few brief glimpses of reality, mere flashes of the way the Creator runs His creation. The rest is dark as night. With this limited perspective, we can't visualize the whole of existence, from where it comes and to where it's going. We can't understand how every event in our lives fits into the Divine plan. That's why this world is like night. Our sight is limited.

That's what G-d was telling Moses when he said, "My face you cannot see." In this world we cannot see G-d's "face" — His direct control of the world in the bright light of day. Only His "back" — a glimpse of His presence in the hindsight of the events of our lives — that much is clear for anyone to see... if we keep our headlights turned on.

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## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

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Giving people the benefit of the doubt

*Though a year has already passed, I still get a tear in my eye when I recall this incident:*

I used to work in a company with a lot of other young Jewish girls like myself. When one of the girls from the group got engaged, I wanted to do something special. Being the creative type, I thought of a good *shtick*. Several years ago, the company had given out caps and sweatshirts with the company logo on it. I decided to collect the caps and sweatshirts from all the employees that still had them, give them to each girl from work that came to the wedding, and dance around with them.

Needless to say, it wasn't easy to collect all this, but I managed to collect enough of them. Right before the dancing was ready to start, I eagerly handed them to each girl. I was surprised that one of the girls, who we will call Chanie, gave me a look of disdain and insisted on not wearing the hat. I took it to mean that she thought the

whole idea was silly. I tried prodding her to put it on, but she vehemently refused. I felt somewhat insulted. I had worked so hard, and wanted everyone to be enthusiastic about it. I also felt that it was out of character for Chanie. She was usually very happy to go along with things.

It was only months later that I understood the incident.

Chanie had been out from work for a few weeks. We all assumed she had a flu. When she returned, we all complimented her on her nice haircut. Chanie kept up such a good front that most of the girls did not realize anything was wrong for months. It was only later that I realized that she was suffering from cancer, and the "new haircut" was not a haircut at all. I now look back on the incident and realize that by the wedding, she had just begun wearing a wig. She did not yet feel secure wearing it, and did not want it to slip. That is why she was not eager to put on the hat.

Unfortunately, this story does not have a happy ending. Chanie passed away. I hope and pray that she forgives me for my feelings of hurt towards her. She has certainly taught me a very strong lesson in giving others the benefit of the doubt.

## Response Line

### The Merchant of Vegas

*Lee Vnyer wrote:*

*The Talmud says that someone who earns their salary from gambling is invalid as a witness in a Jewish court because the people who he wins money from don't really pay with a full heart. Therefore, the money that he wins is considered theft. If so, what about the stock market? People literally gamble as to the price of a particular commodity or stock, and the person who has a holding of this particular item certainly does not want the price to deteriorate. So is someone who gambles on the stock market invalid as a witness?*

Dear Lee,

Stocks are a legitimate investment. Buying stocks is essentially no different than buying diamonds, land, or wheat. True, the stock market has an element of risk, but don't confuse 'lost wages' with 'Las Vegas.' Do you know of any business which involves no element of risk? If so, do you know their phone number?

Gambling, on the other hand, is a game where each person hopes to guess the right number on the dice, or pick the right horse. Anyone who doesn't win has just given his money for nothing.

The Sages of the Talmud differ as to why gamblers are invalid as witnesses in a Jewish court. According to one opinion, someone who wins a bet is like a thief, because he collects prize money that he didn't 'earn' and to which he has no true legal claim.

According to another opinion, only a professional gamester — who has no other source of income — is invalid as a witness. His integrity is suspect, because he spends his day in pursuits which contribute nothing to society. According to this opinion, someone who gambles only part-time can be a valid witness, provided he's involved in some productive activity.

The following story is told about Rabbi Israel Meir HaCohen: A man once asked for a blessing that he should win the lottery, but the Rabbi refused. "You give blessings to people who gamble on stocks, why not when they gamble on lotteries?" the man asked. The Rabbi answered that he gives blessings to stock investors because if the stock goes up, no one loses money. Blessing a lottery ticket, however, is like giving a 'curse' to all the other lottery tickets.