

# **The Daily Portion**

## **- Sivan Rahav Meir**

### **Reach for the sky!**

Translated by Janine Muller Sherr

Are you familiar with the concept of the “greatness of man”? This week was the yahrzeit of Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt”l, who initiated an educational approach in the Jewish world based on this idea. He passed away 99 years ago, but it’s remarkable how relevant his approach remains to our lives today:

- The “greatness of man” encapsulates an entire worldview. In contrast to educational approaches that denigrated the student, Rav Finkel strove to elevate him. Instead of emphasizing the lowness of man, he insisted that man is created in the image of God – that he is the pinnacle of creation and the most exalted creature on earth.
- He emphasized each person’s uniqueness and encouraged everyone to become the most refined version of themselves. He taught that a person should conduct himself as if he or she lives in the King’s palace next to the King Himself. It is a life of nobility, royalty, and grandeur.
- But what about sins? What about the evil inclination? Rav Finkel taught that life does not need be a constant

struggle. If a person would recognize his inherent nobility, he would realize that such shameful behavior was beneath him. If he is on such a high level, how could he even consider stooping so low?

We tend to emphasize the “smallness” of humankind, but it’s important to remind ourselves of our greatness.

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