

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
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life

LESSONS

CIRCLE OF GRATITUDE

With a little effort, any opportunity can be used to make a *kiddush Hashem*. Mrs. Batsheva Perlstein (name changed) was a regular customer at a dry cleaning establishment just outside the Jewish community of Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

Once, when Mrs. Perlstein came to pick up quite a number of garments before Pesach, she realized that she did not have sufficient funds in her bank account to cover the payment. "I'm sorry, Mike," she told the proprietor, "but I don't have the full amount right now. You'll have to hold onto some of the clothing until I do."

"No, it's all right; you can take it all," Mike replied graciously.

Mrs. Perlstein repaid his kindness with a piece of advice to help boost his business: She suggested that he place an advertisement in a local Jewish publication.

Mike accepted her suggestion, and before long found himself serving a large Jewish clientele.

To this day, when Mrs. Perlstein brings him her clothes, he returns the garment with the words "0 dollars — good deed" written on the receipt. He has also come to donate generously to various causes in the Jewish community.

Hakaras hatov toward Hashem causes us to sing His praises. Expressing gratitude to the people around us causes others to praise Him as well.

Adapted from A Life Worth Living by Rabbi Shragee Freedman at LivingKiddushHashem.org, with the permission of the publisher



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OF THE WEEK

UNDER HIS ROOF

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

From the start, the *korban Pesach* is stated to be slaughtered only in order to be eaten by those people who registered for it, who have symbolically nullified their existence and surrendered themselves to Hashem. In no other *korban* is *achila* as essential as it is in the *korban Pesach*, the *korban* of freedom. After all, what does it mean to be free and independent if one does not have the free use and enjoyment of one's own personality? To be able to use all of one's physical energy and mental ability for one's own purposes—this is the essence of independence.

This is why it is so important for this particular *korban* to be eaten by its registrants. The animal symbolizes their personalities even before its slaughter, and the act of offering represents the nullification of their existence and their total commitment to G-d. *Achilas haPesach* symbolizes the freedom and independence that the Jewish people attain by devoting themselves to Hashem. Through *achilas haPesach*, they regain a sense of self after having been slaves, absorbed in the personality of their master.

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powerful
PRAYER

LAMNATZEIACH:
THE DAY OF DISTRESS



This psalm was sung by David after the completion of 18 psalms of praise (or 19; see Brachos 9b). We recite it here to indicate that only after we have praised Hashem in the 18 *brachos* of Shemone Esrei will He "answer us on the day of distress."

This *perek*, too, develops the idea of *Ashrei* further. It points out that when danger is most acute, we should place our hopes in Elokei Yaakov, the G-d who aided Yaakov in all the dark hours of his life. On festive days, this *perek*, with its mention of *yom tzara*, is omitted.

Adapted from World of Prayer by Rabbi Elie Munk

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A NATION WITHIN A NATION

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

Shabbos Hagadol commemorates a miracle that occurred just prior to *yetzias Mitzrayim*. The people were instructed to buy or designate a sheep for the *korban Pesach* on the tenth day of Nissan. This commandment applied only that year. In the future, it would be perfectly permissible to buy the animal on the fourteenth day, Erev Pesach. Every *korban* requires advance checking to ensure that it has no disqualifying blemish. However, that can be done while it is still in the possession of the animal dealer, or out in the pasture. That year's *korban Pesach* was unique in that it had to be purchased by the tenth day of Nissan.

Rashi tells us the reason. The time had come for Hashem to redeem the Jewish people, but they did not have sufficient *mitzvos* to merit it. Although they had the *zechusim* of maintaining their morality and not speaking *lashon hara* about one another, they needed active *mitzvos asei*. Hashem therefore commanded them to prepare the *korban Pesach* in advance, so they would be busy and involved in the performance of a *mitzvah*.

The people followed instructions, acquired sheep or goats, and tied them to their bedposts for the four days until the *korban Pesach*. The Egyptians revered sheep, and the sound of the bleating loud and clear all across Mitzrayim served as an announcement that *bnei Yisrael* were preparing to slaughter their god. The Egyptians wanted to kill them, but Hashem prevented them from doing any harm.

At the time, Egypt was the cutting edge of civilization. Although they had mistreated the Jewish people, once the plagues had arrived, they were no longer enslaved. They could have hoped to become citizens of Mitzrayim. Undoubtedly, this was part of Hashem's plan. *Am Yisrael* needed to be prepared to utterly disconnect themselves from the Egyptian culture and lifestyle.

A Jew must be separate in all things. The pasuk describes *yetzias Mitzrayim* as Hashem taking out "a nation from amidst a nation." This lesson is relevant for all generations. *Am Yisrael* needs to live its own distinct way of life based on the ideals of our Torah. The more we cling together, disconnected from gentile society and its mores, the closer we will be to Hashem and His Torah. 🕊

Hashem builds His nation not from free people, but free families, formed by birth or choice. Only within the framework of the family can an individual find gratification in his own personality. This is symbolized by putting the blood on the *mezuzos* and *mashkof* of the home. The idea of "home" comprises two elements: social insulation from society, and physical insulation from nature. The first is signified by doorposts (*mezuzos*, from *lazuz*, "to move"—to control who may enter and exit), representing walls, a social barrier. The second is signified by the lintel (*mashkof*, from *lehashkif*, "to look down from above"), representing the roof, which provides protection against nature.

When the slaves became men—fathers and sons in families of their own—they receive *mezuzos* and a *mashkof* from Hashem, protection from human and natural forces. But first they must devote themselves to Him, *shechitas haPesach* symbolizing the surrender of their former existence. Only then can they find gratification in their own personality, the *achilas haPesach*, in a home protected by Hashem. This is symbolized by the blood on the doorposts and lintel of the home. It is not walls that protect from hostile human elements, nor is it the roof that shelters from nature—rather, it is Hashem Who, between the walls and under the roof, protects those who devote themselves to Him. 🕊

Based on the commentary of Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l on Chumash, with permission from the publisher.



wonder WORLD

DANCING ON AIR



How do bees communicate?

You may be surprised to know that bees are great dancers. In place of verbal communication, bees' dances communicate important information to different members of the hive. In the round dance, the bee walks in a circle, turns around, then walks the same circle in the opposite direction. The amount of time this dance takes tells the others the amount or quality of food that she has found. To explain where to find the food, the bee uses the waggle dance. The bee waggles back and forth as she moves forward in a straight line. The length of the line she lets the other bees know how far away the food is. The direction of the line tells the others which way to fly. 🕊

Adapted from the Niflaos HaBoreh Explorer series by Rabbi Yaakov Lubin

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