

Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS

FINDING CONTENTMENT II

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A yungerman in Eretz Yisrael was once knocking on doors in a secular moshav to ask if anyone was interested in learning Torah. At one house, the man who answered had been enraged by a recent incident in which chareidim burned an Israeli flag. "I don't want to have anything to do with people who burn our flag!" he thundered.

The yungerman responded gently: "Before we speak about that, let's sit down and learn a little. I will discuss it with you later."

When they finished learning, the man had only one question: "Will you come back again?" He did not bring up the issue of the flag burning again.

When Rav Elya Svei zt"l was told about this incident, he remarked, "The man's change of heart certainly had to do with experiencing the beauty of the Torah, but I am certain that was not the only reason. The encounter with that yungerman, and the exposure to his pleasant and sweet personality, certainly must have had a good deal to do with that change."

This is the key to having a positive influence on our children, our students, and everyone else. The way to make Hashem and His Torah beloved to others is to demonstrate that the Torah can be a source

of contentment. When people are exposed to true happiness, they will learn not to be fooled by cheap substitutes. If our children perceive how sweet and pleasant a life of Torah can be, they will not exchange it for the world



gem

OF THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THEIR KIND

Based on excerpts from the commentary of Rabbi Shmshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l on Chumash, with permission from the publisher.

We spoke briefly in the past that the *chag* of Shavuot is called **יום הבכורים** and a time that begins the offering **מנחות** from the new produce and bringing of the new fruit to the *Beis Hamikdash*. It is a *mitzvah* to bring the **ביכורים** to the *Beis Hamikdash*, a place chosen by Hashem, and they are not to be eaten outside of it.

There are various instructions regarding this *mitzvah*, and although they are simple, fulfilling the *mitzvah* is a mass national movement that takes place during a spiritual elation that lasts throughout the summer months of each year from Shavuot to Sukkot. Not all the fruits of the land are subject to bringing **מנחות**; rather the fruits subject to this duty are only the seven species for which *Eretz Yisrael* is praised.

These fruits represent *Eretz Yisrael* in the hand of the bringer, and they demonstrate that he has come to the land promised to our forefathers, and only the best of their kind, can serve this purpose. The *mitzvah* signifies that the first fruits of our fields and orchards do not ripen for our houses but for the *Beis Hamikdash*, the sanctuary of His Torah. Through this the *mitzvah* cultivates the awareness and the acknowledgment of the primary cause of the *bracha* of our fields.

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powerful
PRAYER



SHEMA KOLEINU:
THE FINAL REQUEST

In this *bracha*, we ask *Hashem* not to send us away empty-handed, reaffirming our belief that He has been listening to all the previous *brachos*. One may include personal requests after the words "*al tishiveinu*." The *Gemara* states that one who does not do so fails to fully appreciate what it means to turn to *Hashem* and plead with Him for one's needs. We have already asked for knowledge, forgiveness, health, and *parnassah* in a general way, but when a person has a personal problem, it's only natural that he would want to request a specific *yeshuah*. Neglecting to do so indicates that he doesn't appreciate the opportunity to speak to *Hashem*

Adapted from *Biur Tefillah* (Ani Maamin Foundation)

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WHEN HASHEM IS CLOSE

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

The very worst king the Jewish people ever had was Menashe, king of Yehuda. As we know, in those days there was a very strong temptation to worship idols. Menashe not only served *avoda zara* himself, he forced the entire people to do the same.

Anyone who stood in his way would be murdered. All the prophets were running for their lives. Although his father had been one of the very best kings, he didn't follow in his footsteps. His grandfather was actually the *novi* Yeshaya, whom he sought an excuse to murder. He claimed that Yeshaya was a false *navi*, because his words contradicted a statement in the *Torah*.

The *Torah* says, "Who is such a great nation that has Hashem close to it, as Hashem, our G-d is, whenever we call on Him." How then could Yeshaya make the statement, "Seek *Hashem* when He can be found, call upon Him when He is close." Yeshaya offered him no answer because he knew it was futile to argue with him. So, indeed, the *navi* was murdered.

Nevertheless, the question is a valid one and deserves an answer. The Gemora says it is no problem. The *Torah* is referring to a time when we call upon Hashem as a community. He is always close. The *novi* was talking about a person who calls upon Him as a single individual. Then He is only close sometimes. So the Gemora asks, when is that time?

The answer: In the ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. So it is, that Hashem brings down His divine presence to be with us all through the ten days of *teshuva*. He wants us to feel His closeness and be inspired to do a full and proper *teshuva*. For this reason, we blow the *shofar* after the *Neilah* service as a sign that the *Shechina* is now departing.

Our task now is to ready ourself for this marvelous opportunity to great our Creator, turn our hearts toward Him and commit ourselves to a life of devotion to His service 🔥

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The prospering of our work is strictly Hashem's will and our faithfulness to the covenant of His *Torah*. Whereas, our own industriousness and favorable physical conditions are merely a secondary cause.

When the pasuk 26:3 says לַה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ to G-d your G-d and in relation to Him, it is the G-d Whose laws you teach and Whose *Torah* and Beis Hamikdash you represent.

We bring the fruit of our land up to *you* (Hashem) and signify that I own my orchards and fields only because I am descended from the patriarchs, to whom Hashem swore that He would give this land to their descendants. My produce stand on the soil of "your" G-d, and they are mine solely by virtue of the fact that I am a son of His covenant. To attest to this I have brought these fruits.

The next pasuk says "And the priest shall take the bucket....to set it down before the altar of G-d, your G-d" this expresses the general purpose of bringing the fruit, While the detailed, actual procedure is described afterward. The fruits are handed over and set before the altar, which is dedicated to our complete devotion to Hashem, and the fulfillment of His *mitzvahs*.

This bringing of first fruits renews consciousness of the intimate connection of every living present — in all its material wealth — with our national origin and duty that comes from it. This in turn, will lead to renewed devotion to the life-mission which was assigned to us.

The handing over is performed jointly by both the bringer and the *cohen*. The act itself is invested with the meaning of dedication to all our fellow men, and to Hashem who is above us.

Now the bringer looks back to the beginnings of the Jewish people, stressing the historical facts that attest for all time to come that, at the establishment of our national existence, only Hashem's Will and almighty power were active. 🔥



wonder WORLD

FRUIT SIGNALS



Can fruit suffer from peer pressure?

Fruit ripening is not just a byproduct of the passage of time; it is a carefully coordinated chemical event. As a fruit grows, its internal clock triggers the production of a chemical hormone called ethylene. This gas breaks down the chlorophyll in the fruit to reveal the underlying colour, converts tasteless starches into sweet sugars, and dissolves the pectin that keeps cell walls rigid—allowing the fruit to become soft and juicy. The ethylene gas released from the first ripening fruit travels to other fruits on the tree and to nearby trees, signaling them to begin ripening as well. This allows all the fruit in an orchard to mature around the same time. An unripe banana along with a ripe apple in a paper bag will ripen within 24 hours, whereas if it was on it's own it would take about 3-4 days 🔥