

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
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life

LESSONS

ELUSIVE HAPPINESS II

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A talmid once told me that he struggled with a lack of interest in learning. We came up with a strategy: he chose a sefer to study during his free time, and he spent an entire year making his way through it. Finally, he made a siyum.

A few weeks later, he admitted that he felt morose again. "It was a great year," he said. "I learned a lot, and the project kept me going. But now that it's over, I feel lost again." The explanation, I told him, was rooted in the nature of happiness: The source of happiness is the journey toward a goal.

When a person is working toward something, he feels fulfilled; once he has achieved it, emptiness may set in again. Celebrating an achievement is exciting, but it is the process that generates true happiness.

That is why the Torah way of life creates happiness: it makes our entire lives a journey toward a goal. For my talmid, this meant it was time for a new learning project.

A life spent seeking excitement may be thrilling, but it will ultimately leave a person empty—without excitement, routine will leave him lacking joy. One who understands true happiness, though, will know how to tap into it even in the most mundane context. In the end, he will lead a much more satisfying life than one who lives for the next thrill.

Life has opportunities for fun—vacation, parties—but they are not a recipe for happiness. True happiness comes from hard work and accomplishment. If we set our sights on those goals, rather than the allure of passing thrills, we will learn the power of joy.



gem

OF THE WEEK

THE KING'S ALLEGIANCE

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

Hashem tells us that when we came to Eretz Yisrael, which He gives to us, that we wanted a king "like all the nations around". The *pasuk* is clear that the role of the king was not to conquer the Land and secure possession.

Moshe Rabbeinu stressed repeatedly that it will be Hashem that will help conquer the land and we then live under His protection. For this purpose we don't need a king, and all Yisrael has to do is prove that it is indeed the loyal people of Hashem's Torah.

This ensures a moral victory over itself from within, and a sure victory against enemies from outside. The *Sifre* says: you need only yourselves, your real selves. In Kiddushin 37b it says that a king is appointed *after* the complete conquest and settlement of the Land, rejecting the idea that the purpose of the monarchy in Israel is the military conquest. The function of the king will be to stand out as first among all Jews loyal to the Torah — to shine personally in all moral nobility of allegiance to the Torah — imbued with the spirit of this mission, seeking to win over all hearts and minds, in thought, word, and deed.

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powerful
PRAYER



ES TZEMECH DOVID:
THE CHOSEN CITY

Kingship was promised to shevet Yehuda by Yaakov Avinu in Parshas Vayechi—but which Yehuda family would rule was unknown. Eventually, David was chosen. Because of his great love for Hashem, he wanted desperately to have the *zechus* to build the Beis Hamikdash, but he was told that that honor would go to his son Shlomo instead. Yet at the same time, Hashem also informed him that his right to be the king would be forever. The *malchus* would never be taken away from David's family and given to someone else, even another person from shevet Yehuda. *Malchus* Beis David will be forever.

Adapted from Biur Tefillah (Ani Maamin Foundation)

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EMUNAH IN THE MIND AND IN THE HEART

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

It is well known that Rav Yisroel Salanter, zt"l, started a movement call the Mussar movement. It's purpose was to inject passion into the observance of Torah and mitzvos, as apposed to serving Hashem robotically, merely out of habit. It was also aimed at counteracting the powerful attraction of Haskalah, the so-called "Enlightenment" that was attracting massive numbers of Jews into secular culture. His hope was that the movement would attract the general public of frum Jews, but it was not to be. Success among the broader population of Yidden was minimal.

However, in most of the *yeshivos* of his time it was a smashing success. In those *yeshivos* there were *mashgichim* and *mussar seforim*. The study of *mussar* affected the *yeshiva* students greatly, to the point that many of them became the *gedolim* and *tzadikim* of the next generation. The study of the classic mussar seforim was not new by any means. Mesilas Yesharim, Shaarei Teshuva, Chovas Halevavos and many others were learned and revered before the new movement.

The idea that was original was in the way that R' Yisroel advocated learning mussar. It was to be done by reciting, over and over, a pasuk, a passage from Chazal or from the *mussar seforim* that would take the concept studied from his mind and bring it into his heart and his emotions. One of Rav Salanter's top talmidim was Rav Itzele Peterburger, who explained the idea behind his Rebbe's movement. It begins with a question, one not so readily understood. Why is it that we don't fear Hashem in the same way that we fear fire?

At first, this sounds quite strange. Obviously, we fear fire because we can see it, but Hashem we can not see. However, I believe that the question must be understood as follows: When people are sitting in a pleasant, comfortable room, and suddenly hear familiar voices of very reputable people shouting, "Fire! Fire! Everyone out!" Their adrenalin starts pumping and they hurry to escape from the building. They haven't seen any flames or smelled any smoke, so, really, they don't know that there is a fire in the building. Why, then, are they afraid?

Because they believe the voices that shouted that there is a fire somewhere in the building. Now we understand R' Yisroel's *kashya*. If a person is a *maamin* and believes that Hashem sees and knows all, how can he possibly allow himself to commit an *aveirah*?

If we believe that the day of judgement is coming at the end of Elul, we should be so frightened from the possible outcome that we can not even sleep. Why don't we fear Hashem, if we truly believe, just as we fear fire when we believe there is one in the building? 

To be continued.

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When the people elected the first king, they ignored the protection that depends solely on Hashem, seeking protection against external enemies. They sought a king not only according to the *form* but also to the *sense* of the nations.

In the days of Shmuel, the time for electing a king had not yet arrived. It was necessary to first complete the return to Hashem, and thereby they would have merited to attain His help to complete the conquest of the Land.

In 17:16-18 the king is commanded not to have too many horses, wives, or excess gold. This imposes on the king the duty of self-restraint, primarily with matters that have always been stumbling blocks to the virtue of rulers, and to the success of their peoples — lust after military glory, women, and wealth.

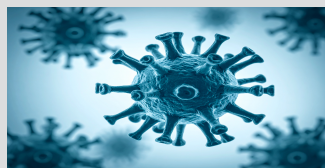
The first act the king does upon ascending the throne, is to write out for himself a copy of the Torah. By doing this he acknowledges that the Law was given to him before all others and he is not above the Law, but, rather, it must be the immutable guideline for all his life, and his mission as king is to make sure the fulfillment of the Law.

Dovid Hamelech is the one king whose personality embraced all the qualities of a king. Neither before him or after, did anyone arise like him. He was dedicated to be the royal root of a line of descendants reaching until the end of days; and a coming generation, which will realize Hashem's Torah completely. This future king will bring this reality, with a spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel and strength, knowledge, and fear of Hashem. 



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FIGHTING CHANCE



How does the body know to fight off sickness?

When the immune system is working well, it can tell the difference between cells that are yours, and those that don't belong in the body. It is made up of a complex network of cells and organs and mobilizes to kill germs that are harmful. It then learns about germs after you've been in contact with them and develops antibodies against them. However, it doesn't always work as it should since there are many factors and conditions that can weaken the immune system. It may be too weak to fight off invaders, or it may send off a response that is too strong 