

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
MAAMIN
Foundation

ISSUE # 385 | NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2024 | 25 ELUL, 5784

life

LESSONS


GRATITUDE AND LOSS

In 2007, Mrs. Tirtza Amsel had just put her two-year-old daughter to sleep when she began coughing. In the morning, she was congested and weak. Tirtza took her to the doctor, where her lips turned blue. The doctor tried to resuscitate her. Paramedics came, intubated her, and rushed to the hospital.

Tirtza's husband, Rabbi Yehuda Amsel, arrived at the hospital. Someone took them to a family room. Before long, two doctors somberly entered. "We've been working on her for about 30 minutes," the senior physician murmured, "and I think what I need to tell you is...we couldn't bring her back."

Yehuda wept, then said "*Baruch dayan haemes.*" Tirtza responded Amen and said the *bracha* too. They thanked the doctors for their efforts and were left alone. The distraught pediatrician arrived at the hospital. The Amsels tried to comfort him, thanking him for trying to save their daughter's life.

A few days later, they discovered the impact of their reactions. A *frum* hospital social worker told them that a week after the incident, the hospital held a staff meeting to review the situation. They concluded that all proper protocols had been followed, but spent most of the meeting discussing how they had been affected by the Amsels. The pediatrician remarked that he had never been thanked when a family lost a child. The room was silent in awe and respect. "The hospital's experience with you made them more respectful of *halacha* and those who keep it."

Even in their grief, the Amsels were consoled by the *kiddush Hashem* that came about from their loss. 

Reproduced from Living Kiddush Hashem by Rabbi Shraga Freedman with permission of the copyright holders, ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications, Ltd.



gem

OF THE WEEK

PEOPLE OF DUAL NATURE

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow


"After my death," Moshe warns the people, "corruption will begin. You will leave the path you were commanded to follow, you will go so far as to disobey on principle, and when your fate is complete, misfortune will befall you."

Nothing attests to the Divine origin of Moshe's mission like the awareness of the past and future expressed in the last four pesukim of the *parsha*. He would have had to be a fool to write such a Book. What greater foolishness could there be than to give laws so at odds with human nature? Moshe himself knew full well that centuries later, the people would still not have adapted themselves to the Law. He appointed no guarantors but heaven and earth, and no means of achieving it but the Book of the Law itself, the teachings that will never be forgotten: *ki lo sishakach mipi zaro!*

Now, looking back on millennia since then, we see that everything has come true. In the end, precisely in times of dire suffering, this nation attached itself so deeply to the Torah that, for the Torah's sake, it endured martyrdom unparalleled in world history. This Torah became our *kanfei nesharim*,
continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER 

ASHER BACHAR BANU:
AN OPEN DOOR

Any non-Jew can become a member of the Chosen People if he wants; the door is open. What is the price of entry? Is there a large application fee? Do they need to take on extra-strict rules? No. All they have to do is go through *tevilah*, *kabbalos hamitzvos*, and for men *bris milah*—the same price that we paid when we accepted the Torah 3,000 years ago. People of any race can join *klal Yisrael*. Jewish history is full of *gerim* who became leaders, prophets, and teachers. The Torah reminds us in 36 places to treat the *ger* as an equal. The idea of a favored nation is not racist, but reflects the sacrifice that we make to serve Hashem. 

Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom

To sponsor a weekly newsletter for \$100,
please email amfmainoffice@gmail.com

THE CHESED OF TESHUVAH

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

As we approach the last Shabbos of a very difficult year, just a few days before Rosh Hashanah, our thoughts turn to the call of the hour: *teshuvah*.

The very first words of the *sefer* Shaarei Teshuva are “This is one of the great kindnesses that Hashem has done with His creations: to allow them to do *teshuvah*.” What does this mean?

After the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash, the leaders of *klal Yisrael* came and sat before the *navi* Yechezkel. They were overwhelmed by their sins. Rashi explains that they wanted to do *teshuvah*, but they didn’t believe it would help. The *navi* makes a promise in the name of Hashem: Hashem does not want to see a *rasha* punished, but rather forgiven through *teshuvah*.

Although these people had sinned greatly, their *emunah* was strong. They experienced open miracles in the Beis Hamikdash, and the Shechinah was present among them until close to the time of the Churban. Why, then, did they find it so hard to believe that *teshuvah* would help? In contrast, our *emunah* is weaker, but we seem confident when Yom Kippur comes that all our sins will be forgiven.

Rav Itzele Peterberger explains that our belief in the efficacy of *teshuvah* depends on our recognition of an *aveirah*’s severity. If we view a sin as something relatively minor, it is easy to believe that we can be forgiven. However, if we were aware of the impact of an *aveirah* on our souls, it would be difficult to imagine that confessing and feeling sorry could undo that.

This is the difference between our generation and our ancestors. Although they had sinned greatly, they were much more aware of how terrible an *aveirah* is, and found it hard to believe that *teshuvah* could help. We, on the other hand, do not recognize the real meaning of a sin. Doing *teshuvah* seems very logical to us.


Rav Yisrael Salanter writes that we should view a sin like a star. When we look up at the sky, the stars seem like little dots. With a telescope, they look much bigger. In truth, they are massive. So too with our sins. We treat them as if they are small, but in reality they are very great—and very harmful.

May we all be *zoche* to proper *teshuvah*, as promised by the *navi* Yechezkel. 

bearing us over all the trials through a world that offers only scorn and degeneration, to attain renewed spirit and vitality.

At the same time, the Torah became a source of light for the world, a fountain from which all our host nations have drunk. To this day, the Torah remains a tree of life, planted by its scattered children in the fields of the future of nations. The seeds of this tree, seeds of peace and truth, bring forth salvation for all of mankind, and the whole world reaps its fruit. Thus, the “Yisrael” of flowering prosperity has indeed become a “Yizre’el” of the exile. As a consequence, the motto of Jewish history – *vayisarvu bagoyim, vayilmedu maaseihem* – was actualized in both senses.

In retrospect, we might suggest that Hashem chose us precisely because of our dual nature: *mamrim heyisem im Hashem, u’fana el elohim acheirim* on the one hand; *lo sishakach mipi zaro* on the other. These two traits make the Jewish people a perfect instrument to fulfill Hashem’s plan for mankind. Even defectors have served His purposes—despite their sins, the Jewish people have carried into exile sparks that can spread, and seeds that can germinate among all mankind.

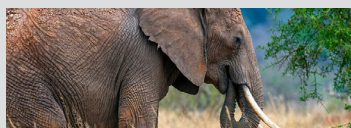
Anyone who reads Moshe’s concluding words and reviews our history, and the history of the Torah, cannot fail to recognize that this is precisely why it could not have been written by Moshe, the man, but only by Hashem, of Whom Moshe was merely a messenger. We, the people, and our Torah, are *etzba Elokim*, the finger of G-d pointing the way for all mankind. 

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




wonder WORLD

TRUNK SHOW



Can an elephant be a lefty?

The largest land animal on Earth, elephants can be over 13,000 pounds and 10 feet tall. They are known for their excellent memories and can remember locations of water sources, humans, and other elephants for many years. They also show emotions such as joy, grief, and compassion. Elephants mourn their dead and comfort family members in distress.

Elephants are famous for their trunks and tusks. The trunk has 150,000 muscles and can be used for everything from drinking water to picking up tiny objects. Just as humans are right or left-handed, elephants can be right or left-tusked. Elephants communicate through different sounds, such as trumpet calls and rumbles, as well as body language and touch. 

Please feel free to take newsletter home to share with your family.

For more information please call (845) 418 2122 or email info@animaamin.org • To subscribe to this newsletter send an email to subscribe@animaamin.org