

Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS

WORKING MAN'S MISSION II

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Many people have discovered that their observance of *mitzvos bein adam l'makom* has a profound impact on their coworkers, and often protects them from the pitfalls of a secular environment.

One man told me that he always feared that his *yarmulke* would put him at a disadvantage, so in his first two corporate jobs, he did not wear one. Fifteen years ago, he put on a *yarmulke* at work, and has found that the effects have been positive. He is highly respected by his peers. The *yarmulke* protects a person from falling prey to tempting corporate shenanigans; it reminds him that he represents Orthodox Jewry, and must be careful about his behavior.

Another man once went to a meeting in the South, in an area where he generally removes his *yarmulke* before meeting prospective clients. After giving a long financial presentation, he asked if there were any questions. No one had anything to ask, which was unusual. When he returned to his car and went to retrieve his *yarmulke* from the glove compartment, he realized that he had never removed it! He realized that there had been no questions because they had seen that he was a religious Jew, and he assumed that the deal would not materialize.

A few weeks later, he was surprised to receive a call informing him that they wished to proceed with the plan. He commented that it was unusual for a client to commit to a plan without asking any questions.

"We could see that you are a man of G-d," the client said, "so we trust everything you said." 



gem

OF THE WEEK

THE WANDERING JEWS

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

In *Parshas Beha'aloscha* 9:17, we learn that only when the cloud rose from the tent did the Children of *Yisroel* journey forth, and at the place where the cloud settled, there did the Children of *Yisroel* camp.

Rabbi Hirsch comments that the cloud was the shepherd's staff that *Hashem* used to reveal to His flock (the *Yidden*) where and when to camp, and when and where they were to travel. The will and intention of this guidance was unpredictable. There were times when the people had to stay in one place for up to a year, and other times they stayed as little as one night.

The *Ramban* explains that since they never knew how long they would camp, every time the cloud rested, they would make all the arrangements for an extended encampment, knowing full well that they might have to break camp in a few hours if the cloud started moving. This is the lesson of the *midbar* (wilderness). We learned to listen and follow *Hashem's* instructions, even when we didn't understand why. *continued on reverse side*

powerful
PRAYER

BAREICH ALEINU:
FOR ALL OF US



When we say *Bareich Aleinu*, we have many things in mind. We pray for success in business. We pray that we will not suffer losses from theft or damage. Of course, we pray for our family to have enough, but we have others in mind as well.

When we see people collecting money, we must understand that they don't have a choice. There are people who go to sleep hungry because they don't have food to eat and cannot pay their bills. Not only must we give them *tzedakah*, we also have to *daven* for them. *Hashem* wants every Jew to care about every other Jew. 

Adapted from *Biur Tefillah* (Ani Maamin Foundation)

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A SERIOUS PROBLEM

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

Last week, I quoted the statements of numerous *Gedolim* who have agreed that there is a serious *emunah* deficit in our time, especially among the youth. What can be done to rectify a serious problem such as this? A few years ago, there was an article in the OU publication Jewish Action with a startling declaration. I quote: "A group of young Jewish day school graduates—all of whom were raised in Orthodox homes—were recently asked about their belief in God. Not a single one could explain why he believes in God or why believing in the Torah differs from believing in any other belief system.

Obviously, the frequency of such a response as this one will depend on the type of homes and the level of the community these students are coming from. However, my personal experience has shown me unquestionably that such attitudes can be found in any Jewish community today. After a year of teaching *emunah* to eighth grade students, one *talmid* whispered to me in private that at the beginning of the year he didn't believe in G-d.

Some years ago, I received a call from a very *Yeshivishe* girls high school requesting that I come and speak. Since at that time it was impractical for me to do so, I suggested that they invite my colleague Rabbi Pinchos Jung, who lives much closer to their area. The *mechaneches* on the phone was appalled at the suggestion. "Oh no!" she said. "I heard that Rabbi Jung follows up his presentation with a question and answer session, where all types of questions come up. (So do I). The girls in our school don't have any such questions." The Bottom line is that he was invited, and he did go. At the end of the session, three very fine young ladies came over and asked Rabbi Jung if they could speak to him privately. Their question: How do we know there is *Hashem*? But, of course, "our girls don't have any questions."

While writing my first document on this subject, I received a call from a genuine *ben-Torah* who was learning in a mainstream *yeshiva*. He was a guest for a *Shabbos* meal, and the host's fourteen year old son began asking him questions that he felt totally unequipped to answer. "How do we know that there really is a G-d? How do we know that Torah is *min hashomayim*? What about other beliefs?" He found it very disturbing that he had nothing to answer to those most fundamental questions. That *motza'ei Shabbos*, the *bachur* polled ten of his *chaveirim*. Each one said he wouldn't have had anything more to answer. We don't necessarily expect that a *talmid* should be expert enough to debate the issues on a sophisticated level. However, can there be any justification for a twenty year old *bachur* never having received any training whatsoever in basic *emuna*?

If I were to continue writing, I could put thousands of words in to recording all the similar stories I have experienced, regardless of the community that the questioners came from. With the help of *Hashem*, next week I will endeavor to present my readers with the simple and most obvious solution to this problem that experience has taught me. ♣ to be continued....

continued from previous page

At times, He makes us leave just as we are beginning to love our situation; at other times, we are forced to stay in situations we would rather leave. Nevertheless, we accept and fulfill with joy whatever He commands.

A shepherd commands his sheep and guides them only for their good. So too, when we are faithful and obedient to *Hashem*, it will bring us nothing but happiness. We will always be ready to trust in Him, follow Him into the unknown, along the mysterious paths—patiently waiting, boldly following, and doing everything according to the direction of His guidance.

If you look closely at how the Torah describes these tests, you will notice that it highlights the waiting as the harder test, not the journeys. In verse 17, it mentions that they journeyed forth only after—not before—the cloud lifted. In verse 18, it repeats that as long as the cloud rested on the *Mishkan*, they remained encamped.

Finally, in verse 19, it highlights that they did not travel even if the cloud rested there for a long time. This is called "Protecting Hashem's Guardianship"—keeping Him in charge—and is the proof of their obedience to Him.

Clearly, the *parasha* stresses *Am Yisroel's* endurance and patience. This is even more understandable if we take into account how inhospitable the wilderness was, and how the people—not yet condemned to wander 40 years—knew that their destination was not in the wilderness. Every stop they made only kept them longer from their promised destination.

Through these exercises, the people acquired the virtue of quiet, serene resignation and trusting patience, which we, as a people, need through our many wanderings through *galus* (exile) after *galus*. It was of this virtue that the prophet said, "If it delays, wait for it" (Chavakuk 2:3).

May the cloud rest again on *Har Habayis* and bring us home *bimhera b'yameinu*. ♣



wonder WORLD

RECYCLING CLOUDS



Do clouds care about the environment?

The sun pumps vast amounts of water from the oceans into the atmosphere by evaporation, forming clouds. The water in the clouds would be useless if not for the wind, which blows the clouds over the continents, causing rain to fall to the earth through the power of gravity. The rain irrigates the soil, runs into underground streams, and eventually flows back to the ocean for the process to start anew. This is a pattern of recycling that is evident throughout all of nature. All of creation is full of this magnificent wisdom and planning. In *Parashas Beha'Aloscha*, *Hashem* moved the *ananei hakovod* and directed the *Yidden*, the ultimate protection. Next time you see clouds, think of *Hashem* directing every step of your way. ♣