

# Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS

## GOOD NEIGHBORS

Education about Jewish culture can be the key to developing a good rapport with non-Jewish neighbors. While the typical frum Jewish family does not disturb their neighbors with parties and loud music, there is still a certain amount of disturbance that their neighbors will have to tolerate.

Many frum children do not entertain themselves with television or video games, and as a result, can often be found outdoors for many more hours than the average child today. Our children may spend that time riding noisy toys on the sidewalk and otherwise making a commotion. A frum family's lawn may not be as well tended, and a family with many children generates much more noise than the average household.

It is only natural for a non-Jewish neighbor to be irritated by these things, but greeting neighbors regularly and having an occasional conversation with them can be highly effective in dispelling these negative feelings.

In all of these situations, positive interaction and communication are the key to good relations. If we act indifferent to the people around us, we shouldn't be surprised if they become resentful or hostile.

On the other hand, if we show them that we are aware that they exist, and that they are worthy of our attention, apologies, and explanations, then we can create much more positive feelings, and that will contribute to our goal of *kiddush Hashem*.

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OF THE WEEK

## A KOHEN'S AUTHORITY

*By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow*

Neither the *kohen* nor even the *kohen gadol* is granted any authority by virtue of his priestly office. It is not the task of the *kohen gadol* to interpret the Torah. His word as a *kohen* does not have the binding authority to permit or forbid.

Bear in mind that the *par kohen hameisiach* is brought only for the *kohen's* own sin, due to an error on his part in interpreting the law, unlike the *par he'elem davar shel tzibbur* which is brought for *horaah l'acheirim v'shgagas acheirim*. In everyday life, among the people, the position of the *kohen gadol* in relation to the Torah is no different from that of the lowliest woodcutter.

This proves wrong the talk of a Jewish hierarchy—as though *kehuna* were the source of all hierarchical pretentiousness. This false claim, which has passed from mouth to mouth, is utterly discredited by Jewish law and by the facts of Jewish history. Throughout thousands of years of Jewish history, the influence of priestly authority in the shaping of the community was not pronounced. The overwhelming majority of men who had impact on the life

*continued on reverse side*

powerful  
PRAYER

EMES V'YATZIV:  
OPEN DOOR POLICY



*Emes v'yatziv* is also called Geulah. In this *bracha*, we remind ourselves of the miracles Hashem did in Mitzrayim, *makkas bechoros* and Krias Yam Suf. The Gemara states that one who says Geulah right before Shemone Esrei is assured of a place in Olam Haba. Rashi explains that this *bracha* expresses praise and appreciation for the *nissim* Hashem performed for us in Mitzrayim. This brings us close to Him, and thus is a good time to ask for our needs. If we did not say Shemone Esrei right then, it would be like knocking on the palace door and walking away. The king might answer, but would see that his friend has gone.

*Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom*

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## THE SOURCE OF KINDNESS


By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

In his commentary on Pirkei Avos, the Bartenura explains why the Mishnah begins with the words, “Moshe received the Torah from Sinai.” After all, such a phrase would be an appropriate introduction to any tractate. He answers that since scholars of other nations have also written books about ethics, the Mishnah wants to convey that the guidance recorded here comes to us from Sinai, as part of the Torah.

The Gemara tells of a non-Jew who came to Shammai and asked to be converted by learning the whole Torah while standing on one foot. Understandably, Shammai sent him away. But the prankster was not finished; he went to Hillel with the same request. Hillel said, “Sure. What is hateful to you, do not do to your friend. This is the whole Torah. The rest is merely explanation.” Rashi explains that in this one phrase, Hillel summarized all the laws *bein adam l’chaveiro*. But why did he change the Torah’s positive framing, “Love your friend as yourself,” to the negative, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your friend”?


Perhaps the answer lies in what the Torah means when it commands us to love a friend like ourselves. The Ramban explains that the Torah does not mean that a person should love someone else as much as himself, but rather that he strive to see that his friend’s needs are fulfilled in every way that he fulfills his own needs.

Ancient societies knew of no such ideas. There were no ideals of feeding the hungry or clothing the poor, or even refraining from harming another. The non-Jew would have been overwhelmed by such a noble concept. So Hillel tempered it somewhat by merely introducing the negative side. If you don’t like when someone insults you, don’t insult someone else. If you become upset when someone vandalizes your property, don’t do it to someone else. This was a much easier idea to accept than the whole scope of the mitzvah.

The world’s values of caring for the underprivileged and showing sensitivity to others were introduced through exposure to Judaism and the Jewish people. We showed the way. The awesome code of conduct prescribed by our Torah should arouse a tremendous sense of pride. 

of the Jewish nation as its leaders and teachers were not *kohanim*, and those among them who were *kohanim* exerted influence not by virtue of their priestly position but on account of their personal qualities—which would have opened the nation’s hearts to them even had they not been descendants of Aharon.

If there are *kohanim* and *levi'im* who happen to be qualified to sit on the Sanhedrin, it is a mitzvah to appoint them, but the Sanhedrin need not have *kohanim* and *levi'im* in order to serve as an authority. The *kohanim* and *levi'im* know that “*Hashem hu nachalasan*.” Since they have no inheritance in the land, they devote themselves to the service and knowledge of the Torah. But their function is to teach, to influence the nation to serve Hashem, to make peace between people—not to wield the authority of the Law.

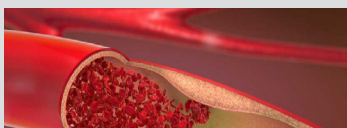
The task of the *kohen gadol*, then, is this: His life should serve as an example of proper understanding and proper observance of the Torah. That which the *beis din hagadol* is to teach the nation to fulfill, the *kohen gadol* is to exemplify in his life. It is fitting that he be *mufta b’horaah*, but his primary task is to be a model for his people and to actualize, in his life, his knowledge of Torah. 

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




## wonder WORLD

### CLOT MACHINE



#### How do we stop bleeding?

In Parshas Vayikra, the Torah speaks often about blood, especially in the *korbanos*. What happens when blood leaves the body? When you get a cut, your body quickly starts a process called clotting. Blood vessels tighten to slow the flow. Tiny cells called platelets gather and stick together, forming a plug. After that, special proteins in the blood create a net that traps cells and forms a clot, a natural bandage that stops the bleeding and protects the body while the skin heals. Without clotting, even small injuries could be dangerous. With it, the body can protect itself almost instantly. It’s one more example of how Hashem designed the human body with built-in systems to preserve life. 

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