

Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS

EXPLAIN POLITELY

The residents of Ezras Torah were perturbed by a stranger who would drive around the neighborhood every Shabbos. Some began protesting, but Rabbi Hershel Zaks took a different approach. He memorized the license plate number, and after Shabbos, looked up the man's address. He drove over and knocked on the door.

A little boy opened the door and called over his shoulder, "*Hashchorim higu*—the 'black ones' [religious people] are here!" His father shouted, "Give them a *shekel*!"

"We're not here for money," Rabbi Zaks said. "We want to talk to your father."

The man came to the door. Rabbi Zaks gently explained how the Jews of Ezras Torah were pained by the car in their streets on Shabbos. The man replied, "You're crazy, but you're right. I won't drive on your streets."

A year and a half later, Rabbi Zaks received an invitation to a bar mitzvah. At the *simcha*, the father of the boy asked him, "Rabbi, do you recognize me? Two years ago, you came to my door and asked me not to drive in Ezras Torah on Shabbos. Because you cared enough to explain, I became shomer Shabbos. I sent my child to a religious school. I want him to learn how to emulate you." 

Adapted from A Life Worth Living by Rabbi Shragee Freedman, with the permission of the publisher



gem

OF THE WEEK

MISHKAN AND MIKDASH

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

The construction of the Mishkan, which begins in this *parsha*, is followed by Toras Kohanim, a series of laws regarding the sanctity of the Mishkan and of life. When we consider the conclusion of Toras Kohanim—*im bechukosai teileichu...v'nasati mishkani b'sochechem*—two things become clear.

The first: the meaning of *v'shachanti b'socham* extends far beyond the Shechina resting in the Mishkan. Its true meaning is having Hashem in our midst, a fulfillment of the *bris* between Him and the Jewish people, which manifests itself in prosperity under His protection and by His blessing.

The second: Hashem does not grace us with His protection, and blessing simply because we constructed and maintain a Mishkan. Rather, His Presence is with us because we sanctify our lives, both on a personal and national level, and fulfill His commandments. Not only has this been proven historically by the destruction of Mishkan Shilo and the two *batei mikdash*, but the Torah itself stresses this with explicit warnings immediately upon the founding and building of the Beis Hamikdash, and on almost every page *continued on reverse side*

powerful
PRAYER 

BRICH SHMEI:
A FAVORABLE TIME

Brich Shmei follows the basic idea determining what prayers will be recited when the Torah is removed from the *aron kodesh*. The Zohar formulates it as follows: "When the congregation takes the Torah from the ark to read from it, the Gates of Mercy are opened in Heaven and love is awakened on High; therefore this prayer should be said." This prayer makes use of a favorable hour to pray for the fulfillment of our hearts' desire. For a similar reason, the Av Harachamim and the Yehi Ratzon are recited at this point, and the Yud-Gimel Middos are invoked on holidays. The *pasuk v'ani tefillasi* (Tehillim 69:14) alludes to this *eis ratzon*. 

Adapted from World of Prayer by Rabbi Elie Munk

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CREATED FOR TWO WORLDS

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

In Pirkei Avos, Shimon Hatzaddik taught that one of the three things for which the world was created is *avodah*. As we know, this world is not an end in and of itself, but a pathway to Olam Haba. The three activities enumerated by Shimon Hatzaddik are all ways of connecting ourselves to the Shechina.

Although *avodah* refers specifically to *korbanos*, *tefillah* is also called *avodah*, and is a substitute for *korbanos* when we cannot bring them. Obviously, prayer can only accomplish its goal when it is done with a feeling of closeness to Hashem. To do that, we need to have an idea of what we are saying, and pay attention to the words, so that our emotions can be aroused to a greater connection. Therefore, we will begin explaining the meaning behind some of our daily prayers.

Among the first *brachos* we recite in the morning are Asher Yatzar and Elokai Neshama. In Parshas Bereishis, the creation of man is described with the word *vayiytzer*, with the *yud* appearing twice. The creation of the animals, however, is described as *vayitzer*, with only one *yud*. Rashi quotes Midrash Tanchuma and explains that animals were created only for this world, whereas mankind was created for this world and the next. These two *brachos*—Asher Yatzar and Elokai Neshama—refer to those two *yetziros*.

Each time we say Asher Yatzar, we acknowledge that the wisdom of Hashem is evident in every function of our bodies. Then we say Elokai Neshama, which reminds us that we were not created merely for our existence in this world, but for a much greater purpose: Olam Haba and *techiyas hameisim*. There, the *neschama* will play the starring role, giving us an eternal life in the radiance of the Shechina. When the *neschama* is blown into Adam in Bereishis, the *pasuk* refers to it as “*nishmas chaim*,” the *neschama* of life. Through it, we will live eternally beyond our short stay in this world. 

of the *nevi'im*.

Nevertheless, the Torah declares that *v'shachanti b'socham* will result from *v'asu li mikdash*. *Mikdash*, then—sanctification—is nothing but the expression of the task that earns the presence of the Shechina if fulfilled. Thus, the *pasuk* of *v'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'socham* contains two concepts whose symbolic expression is found in the construction of the Mishkan. These concepts are *mikdash* and *mishkan*.

Mikdash expresses the totality of the task we fulfill towards Hashem; *mishkan* expresses the promises Hashem fulfills to us in return. *Mikdash* signifies the consecration of all of our lives, both public and private, to the fulfillment of Hashem's Torah; *mishkan* signifies the promised presence of the Shechina, manifesting itself in the prosperity of our private and national life under His protection and by His blessing.

The Mishkan is to be *mikdash*, a place made holy, and *mishkan*, a place of Hashem's closeness. In it, we seek and attain holiness and closeness, and this consecration and closeness, mutual covenantal relationship between Hashem and *klal Yisrael*, established through Hashem's giving the Torah, and our acceptance of it, is the context within which the significance of the Mishkan is found.

It explains why the *perakim* on the Mishkan's construction follow the *perakim* containing the fundamental principles of *halacha*, and the covenant established on their basis. 

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



wonder WORLD

STARTLE REFLEX



How can a tiny frog defend itself?

Red-eyed tree frogs have bright, leaf-green bodies, with yellow and blue stripes down the sides and big red eyes dominating their heads. The insides of their legs and undersides are orange. These frogs are quite small, just 1 to 2.5 inches long. They have sticky pads on the ends of their fingers and toes to grip twigs and branches. During the day, red-eyed tree frogs hide among leaves. If they are disturbed, they open their eyes and display their bright colors. Potential predators may be momentarily startled, giving the frog time to hop away. This coloring is the adult red-eyed tree frog's only defensive strategy. Unlike other rainforest frogs, they are not poisonous. 

Adapted from the Niflaos HaBoreh Explorer series by Rabbi Yaakov Lubin

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