

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
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life

LESSONS

ACCEPTING DAAS TORAH

We know of Rav Sholom Schwadron as a speaker and storyteller, but we have to remember that he was a tremendous *talmid chacham* and a *baki* in *halacha*.

Rav Sholom never left Eretz Yisroel without asking *daas Torah* first—he would ask Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, and after Rav Chatzkel was *niftar*, the Steipler. Before one trip, Rav Sholom sent his son Rav Ariel to get permission from the Steipler to go to America. The Steipler said to Rav Ariel, “There was never a speaker like Rav Sholom and there never will be a speaker like Rav Sholom. I give him permission to go, so that he should be able to inspire people.”

When Israel first became a state, buses were not allowed to run on Shabbos, except in Haifa. The *rabbanim* of Haifa asked Rav Sholom to come to the city to speak about *shemiras Shabbos*.

He arrived in Haifa on a Friday, which was Yom Haatzmaut. The city of Haifa held a parade, which included a contingent of female soldiers who rode at the head of the procession in the same car as the mayor. Rav Sholom was incensed by the immodesty. Instead of speaking about Shabbos, every speech he gave during his visit was about *tznius*. Sunday morning, back in Yerushalayim, Rav Sholom got a phone call. The municipality of Haifa had decided to ban him from speaking there ever again.

Rav Sholom went to the Brisker Rav. “Did I do the right thing?” he asked.

The Brisker Rav told him that he was wrong. “You should have stuck to the topic of *shemiras Shabbos*,” he said. Rav Sholom accepted this, putting his own ideas aside—*daas Torah* was *daas Torah*.

Courtesy of Agudas Yisroel of America



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OF THE WEEK

INVIOLEABLE TRUTHS

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

With the instructions to build the Mishkan and with the handing over of the Luchos, Matan Torah was completed. Now it was necessary to plant the nation’s soul, the Torah, in its midst. From the Mishkan, the Torah would radiate out to the entire nation, and its spirit would fill the heart of each individual, to realize the promise: *Vasu li mikdash, veshachanti besocham*.

But as all this was transpiring on Har Sinai, events were taking place in the camp below that attested only too realistically to the vast gulf between the reality of the people and the heights of the Torah they were to receive.

Hashem’s threat—“*Achaleim, ve’eseh oscha l’goy gadol*,” that the nation that had been established to receive the Torah would be destroyed, while Moshe and the Torah were assured of a future—demonstrated the absoluteness of the Torah’s destiny. It comes from Hashem, and like Him, it is timeless.

No one should ever imagine that the Torah should be adapted to changing times. On the contrary, each generation is entitled to a present and a future only while it accommodates itself to the Torah. The Torah is the absolute,

continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER

BIRKAS HAMAZON:
PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE



The third *bracha*, *uvnei Yerushalayim*, comes in the form of a request, *racheim na*—please have mercy. Just as the first *bracha*, *hazan es haolam*, acknowledges that we are completely dependent on G-d in the present, and the second *bracha* traces all past events to His activity, the third *bracha* points out that the future, too, is something we expect only from Hashem. Both our national and personal existence today, as well as the restoration of the Beis Hamikdash and kingship one day, are determined by Him.

Adapted from *World of Prayer* by Rabbi Elie Munk

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THE FLAVOR OF A MITZVAH

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

The Ani Maamin Foundation was formed to strengthen the *emunah* of *klal Yisroel*. Without clarity in *emunah*, Yiddishkeit is merely a culture or a lifestyle. With it, it is the absolute truth. When we understand that every mitzvah has a reason and was given to us for our benefit, the service of Hashem can be transformed from a burden to a privilege and a pleasure.

Every good cook knows that a dish needs all the right spices in just the right amounts. Leave them out, and the food will be tasteless and unappetizing. The nutritional value might be the same, but it just won't taste good. In *lashon hakodesh*, the word *ta'am* can be translated as "reason" or as "taste." Each mitzvah is there to provide spiritual nutrition, and each one has its own special purpose. A mitzvah may help us internalize a concept, refine our *middos*, bring us closer to Hashem, or prepare our *neshama* for Olam Haba. We receive that "nutrition" as long as we perform the act, but without an appreciation of the ideas behind it, we are missing out on the flavor.

When our *chachamim* offer reasons for *mitzvos*, it is not to say that this or that is the entire rationale for it. Since every one of the 613 commandments comes from Hakadosh Baruch Hu, a mitzvah is infinitely deep, just as Hashem Himself is infinite. A reason gives us the flavor. It increases our awareness.

The Rambam writes, "It is proper for a person to contemplate the laws of the Holy Torah and to understand them as much he can. Something for which he knows no reason should still not be light in his eyes...Let him not think about [the Torah] as he thinks about mundane things. Come and see how strict the Torah is with *me'ilah*—sticks and stones, dust and ashes, become holy merely because Hashem's name is called upon them with words. Whoever treats them as non-holy has committed the sin of *me'ilah*. Even if he did so unintentionally, he still needs atonement. How much more so with the actual *mitzvos*! Let one not rebel against them just because he does not know the reason!"

The message of the Rambam is clear: *mitzvos* do have reasons. We should try to understand them to the best of our ability. If we don't, however, that should not diminish our reverence and respect for the *mitzvos*, because each one is the word of Hashem.

To be continued. 


ultimate goal of the Jewish nation. And the generation of Matan Torah was still infinitely far from it.

If, the Torah, with its unalterable ideals, nevertheless came down to that generation, the implication is this: the Torah was not given to the people to suit their convenience. Rather, it was given to *klal Yisrael* so that the nation should shape itself, elevate itself, to the moral and spiritual heights of the Torah.

As soon as the Torah came down to *klal Yisrael*, over whom it was meant to reign supreme, *cheit ha'eigel* presented it with its first challenge. The Torah was to demonstrate Divine power by training this people to accept it out of complete submission, and its resting place was to be first and foremost a place of education toward a better and purer future.

In Devarim 9:20, we are told that Aharon committed a serious sin in playing along with the *cheit*. He should have opposed the people, even at the risk of his own life. Aharon thought, however, that it would be prudent to yield. He reasoned that if he were to fall victim to the mob, they would lose all restraint. By taking control of the events, Aharon believed he would be able to stall until Moshe's return and limit the scale of the people's sin.

In the aftermath, the man designated as the first *kohen gadol* learned, and taught all future generations, that a Jewish leader cannot try to be clever. The truths of the Torah are not his own to concede. He may not give up part of them to save the rest.

G-d's testimony is inscribed on granite rock. One can acknowledge it, or, at his own peril, reject it. But no one, not even the *kohen gadol*, can alter so much as one letter. 

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




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BARLEY THERE



When do we bring animal food as a korban?

Barley is a versatile grain. It can be eaten as a whole grain, such as in soups, salads, or cholent, or processed into cereal flakes. Barley flour can be used to make bread, cakes, pancakes, and pasta. Soaking, germinating, and drying barley grains produces malt, the main ingredient in beer, whiskey, and other alcoholic beverages. In halacha, barley is primarily considered a food for animals, and indeed it is a major source of animal feed today, especially for cattle, pigs, and poultry. If barley is considered animal food, how can we bring it as a korban? The mefarshim give many answers. However, on a practical level, barley ripens very quickly. It is ready to be brought as a korban well before other crops that may be more refined or sophisticated. 

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