

Pulse OF Emunah

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life


LESSONS

TIME IN BETWEEN

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l* lived his whole life in Yerushalayim. A brilliant *posek* with expertise in every area of *halacha*, his every interaction was conducted with the utmost sensitivity. *Yidden* from all over flocked to hear his wisdom.

Rabbi Yerachmiel Fried is a *rosh kollel* and the author of Yom Tov Sheini Kehilchaso and Maadanei Shlomo (*psakim* heard from R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach). Every Tuesday, Rabbi Fried was *zoche* to drive Rav Shlomo Zalman home from yeshivah. He had arranged this in order to work on a *sefer* on Yom Tov Sheini. Rav Shlomo Zalman had a lot of *hakaras hatov* to Rabbi Fried for driving him, and he would speak to him about the *sefer* during the ride. He would go over everything inside and make sure everything was exactly the way he wanted it to be stated.

Once, when Rabbi Fried got in the car with Rav Shlomo Zalman, he saw that the *rav* was unusually *b'simcha*, beyond his constant state. He was excited about something. As they were driving, Rav Shlomo Zalman told Rabbi Fried that he'd thought he'd heard it all, after fifty or sixty years *paskening shailos* on Yom Tov Sheini. But today, "I got a new *shaileh* on Yom Tov Sheini that I've never gotten before!" He was full of *simcha* because of the question.

By the time the *sefer* was finished, a second *sefer*—Maadanei Shlomo—came out too, full of other questions they had discussed and *hanhagos* Rabbi Fried had observed. Two *sefarim*, all during Rav Shlomo's in-between time getting from yeshivah to home. Others' lives can be built from the "in-between times" of *gedolim!* 

Courtesy of Agudas Yisroel of America



gem

OF THE WEEK

MAKING OUR OWN GODS

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

These words—*lo saasun iti, mizbeiach adama taaseh li*—mark the division between the Divine and the non-Jewish views of man's relationship to G-d.

It is delusional to think that man can make for himself a god—that he can set before himself an image, a power, an institution, a man, as his own highest ideal, and that this thing he has chosen to worship will decide his fate.


It is delusional to think that man needs to make for himself a god—that to ensure his future, he should look to things of his own making. The heathen imagines that through these things he pays homage to the Power that rules the world and fulfills his duty by acknowledging his dependence on Him. But it is nonsense to think of man's dependence on G-d in terms of fate and in the passive terms of human relationships.

These delusions have from time immemorial dominated the non-Jewish world, and have produced both crude and spiritual fetishism. In opposition stands the truth of Judaism, which is meant to put an end to idolatry, no matter what form it takes. Man cannot make for himself a god. Man cannot

continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER 

BIRKAS HAMAZON:
FROM HASHEM'S HAND

The center of the *bracha* of Racheim is occupied with a list of personal requests beginning with "*Elokeinu, avinu, re'enu*." They contain the wish that Hashem sustain us with His "full, open, holy and generous Hand." This distinguishes the gift from on high from the gift of human hands, which is often insufficient, may be granted through favoritism, and may have been acquired by unethical means. The *bracha* then flows into a prayer for Jerusalem: *Uvnei Yerushalayim*. It emphasizes that Hashem will rebuild Jerusalem *b'rachamav*, with mercy. 

Adapted from *World of Prayer* by Rabbi Elie Munk

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THE FLAME OF SHABBOS

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

The mitzvah of Shabbos is mentioned twelve times in the Chumash. Two of them are in the two repetitions of the Aseres Hadibros. The first gives us a reason for the *issur melacha*: “For in six days Hashem created the heavens, the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh. Therefore Hashem blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” On Shabbos, we have time to think about the marvels of creation and recognize Who brought them about.

In the second repetition of the Aseres Hadibros, in *parshas Va’eschanan*, we are given an additional reason for this mitzvah: “And you shall remember that you were slaves in the land of Mitzrayim and Hashem took you out from there with a strong hand and outstretched arm. Therefore, Hashem commanded you to establish the day of Shabbos.”

Yetzias Mitzrayim serves as a testimony to *ma’asei Bereishis*. No human beings were present at Creation, but we were present in Mitzrayim. There we saw that Hashem is in control of everything in the universe. We only need to remember what our own eyes to know that He is the Almighty Creator.

A beautiful story is told in the Gemara of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son, Rabbi Elazar, who hid from the Romans in a cave for many years, spending every second learning Torah. When they finally emerged, they were disappointed to find people busy earning a livelihood and not learning Torah constantly. Finally, on erev Shabbos, they saw a man with two bundles of *hadasim*. He told them that they were *l’kavod Shabbos*—one for *zachor*, one for *shamor*. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said to his son, “See, my son! Even though they are busy with their work, they still show affection for *mitzvos*.”

A certain *rav* once told a story to his shul: it was reported to the Chofetz Chaim that a *bachur* in his yeshiva had been *mechallel Shabbos*. The Chofetz Chaim called him in and spoke to him for about one minute. The bachur remained a strict *shomer Shabbos* all his life. After davening, an elderly man came over to the *rav* and told him that the story was true: he was that *bachur*.

“Tell me,” the *rav* asked, “what did the Chofetz Chaim say to you in one minute?”

“He didn’t say much,” the man answered. “He held my hand with great warmth, while two tears rolled down his cheeks. He said in a pleading voice, ‘Shabbos! Shabbos!’ His tears fell on my hand. Every Friday night I feel like two flames are burning my hand on that spot. I have never, ever been able to bring myself to be *mechallel Shabbos* again.”

The flame of Shabbos will burn forever! 


draw G-d near by representing the godly in a corporeal form; rather, man should draw himself near to G-d in every aspect of his life: by filling his whole being with spirituality and morality, and by subordinating all his activities to G-d’s commandments.

In order to attain closeness to G-d and to secure G-d’s protection and guidance, it is not G-d that man must influence, but himself. He should be preoccupied not with shaping his fate, but with shaping his deeds.

Man must recognize that G-d has no physical qualities he can influence. He has absolute freedom, free will, and unlimited power; He rules the world in freedom and has revealed His Will to man as the measure of all things.

To G-d’s Will man must surrender his whole being—joyfully, freely, and with all the strength of his personality. Only then will blessing shower upon him and bring success to his work. Obedience to G-d out of free will is all that is necessary to bring blessing to man, community and individual. Nothing can take its place.

All subjective caprice is like heathenism and idolatry, for it is based on the delusion that man can arbitrarily exert influence over the shaping of his future, which is equivalent to the belief that man can bend the Will of the Divine. Thus man places his own ego on par with—even in opposition to—G-d’s will.

This is the essence of what Shmuel said to Shaul long ago: “Obedience is better than sacrifices; paying heed is better than the fat of rams; for the sin of witchcraft is disobedience, obstinacy, and following oracles are self-willed acts.” 

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



wonder WORLD

THE GRASS IS GREENER



What is the first link in the food chain?

Grass is one of the unsung heroes of the plant world. There are thousands of species, each with unique characteristics. Grass’s green pigment captures sunlight efficiently, and its extensive root systems anchor it firmly into the earth, drawing up water and nutrients. Narrow leaves minimize water loss, which is crucial for survival under the hot sun. Grass uses photosynthesis to convert sunlight into food for itself and the animals that graze on it. Grass is eaten by small animals like insects or rabbits, which are then eaten by larger predators, and so on. Grass may not be strikingly beautiful or exotic, but it is the foundation of the food chain. From the smallest insects to the largest herbivores, grass supports life in a way that few other plants can match.

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