

# Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS


## A SPECTRUM OF NUANCE

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would often lament that in our generation, everything has become black and white, *assur* or *muttar*. The subtleties and nuances have been lost. Rabbi Yerachmiel Fried, who wrote *sefarim* of Rav Shlomo Zalman's *psakim*, once had a conversation with him in which he stated, "The *rosh yeshivah* said that such-and-such is *assur*."

"I didn't say it is *assur*," Rav Shlomo Zalman corrected. "I said it is a *davar mechuar*"—ugly, not forbidden. He possessed a spectrum of vocabulary to describe things that one should or should not do.

On one occasion, they spoke about the *eiruv* in Yerushalayim, Rabbi Fried describing those who do not carry as "*lechatchila lo metaltelim*." Rav Shlomo Zalman stopped him. "You cannot say *lechatchila* about something that the Mishnah Berurah permits. They are *machmirim* on themselves, that you can say." Only then could he continue with the *shailah*.

Another time, they were discussing whether to include a certain *shailah* regarding a leniency in a *sefer* about Yom Tov Sheini. "It's okay, I don't have such a *pachad* to put it in," Rav Shlomo Zalman said. "It's not like Shabbos. It's only Yom Tov Sheini, it is *derabbanan*." Months later, another *shailah* related to a leniency came up. This time, Rav Shlomo Zalman said "I have *pachad* to put this in the *sefer*."

"I thought the *rosh yeshivah* does not have a *pachad* to say a *kulah* for Yom Tov Sheini," Rabbi Fried said. Once again, Rav Shlomo Zalman corrected him. "I said there is not *pachad* like Shabbos, but *pachad yeish!*" Every subtlety was so important to him, and everything he said or wrote was precise. 

Courtesy of Agudas Yisroel of America



gem

OF THE WEEK

## PARENTAL PURITY

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

The mitzvah of *milah* is the fundamental condition of the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. *Milah* requires that man subordinate his body to G-d's will. In doing so, we actualize the potential for freedom, which is what the laws of *tahara* are intended to preserve. The *orlah*, representing the undisciplined, unmastered body, is the embodiment of belief in man's lack of freedom, a belief that stems from the idea of *tumah*.

Thus, we find many *mitzvos* in which the *arel* and the *tamei* are paralleled: both are prohibited from eating *terumah* and *kodshim*, and both are exempt from the mitzvah of *re'iya b'regel*. It appears that the day of *milah* restores to our consciousness the teaching of moral purity.

Hence, on the day of her son's *bris*, the child's mother too enters the stage of returning *tahara*. Moreover, on account of this day, the *tumah* and *tahara* cycle of the *yolides* is shortened by half.

When a woman has given birth to a girl, the period of *tumah* and *yemei tohar* is doubled; and the words *shvuqyim k'niddasa* imply that this cycle is seen


*continued on reverse side*

powerful  
PRAYER 

BIRKAS HAMAZON:  
KING OF THE WORLD

The fourth *bracha* of Birkas Hamazon mentions G-d's kingship three times—*Elokeinu melech haolam, avinu malkeinu, hamelech hatov*.

These essential words declare Hashem to be the absolute ruler over the world and over all mankind.

The idea of the kingdom of Heaven is like a motif interwoven throughout Birkas Hamazon, but it is emphasized in this last *bracha*, highlighting the basic idea of Birkas Hamazon: the care that the King of all Kings has for all of His subjects. 

Adapted from *World of Prayer* by Rabbi Elie Munk

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## OUR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

*By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation*

The Torah commands us to say the Shema twice a day, and so we recite it 730 times a year in davening. It is the first *pasuk* we teach our children when they begin to speak, and the last words that a dying person says as he leaves the world. Martyrs throughout Jewish history were killed *al kiddush Hashem* with these words on their lips. It is our way of declaring our loyalty to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

In numerous *tefillos*, we ask Hashem to show us favor in the merit of our reciting Shema—“Guardian of Yisrael, preserve what remains of Yisrael, and let Yisrael not perish, [those] who say Shema Yisrael. Guardian of the unique nation, preserve the remnant of the unique nation, and let not the nation that declares ‘Hashem Echad’ perish.” “From His place may He turn in mercy, and favor the nation that declares His name One, twice every day with love, saying Shema.”

As the only nation that declares to the world the unity of Hashem, our mission has not been easy. When we say the words “*bechol nafshecha*,” we are supposed to imagine ourselves given the choice to transgress the Torah or be killed. There you stand, tied to the stake, the executioner about to light the fire at your feet. He offers you one last chance to give up your religion and live. “Light the fire!” you say.

We have had many role models in this respect. When the Chofetz Chaim was very old, he was too weak to leave his home, even to the yeshiva next door. A *minyan* davened regularly in his house. Since a person is supposed to hear himself say the words of davening, and the Chofetz Chaim could not hear well, he said the words of Shemone Esrei quite loudly. *Minyan* members heard him say repeatedly, “Please take my life *al kiddush Hashem!*” When we resolve that we would give our lives *al kiddush Hashem* if necessary, we are credited with the mitzvah as if we actually had.

In *Maseches Brachos*, we learn the story of Rabbi Akiva’s martyrdom. The Roman governor of Yehuda had his flesh scraped with iron combs, and all the while Rabbi Akiva recited the Shema. His talmidim looked on in astonishment: “Rabbeinu—even now?”

“All my life,” Rabbi Akiva answered, “I was concerned about fulfilling the *pasuk* of *bechol nafshecha*, to give my life *al kiddush Hashem*. At last I have an opportunity!”

After 3,000 years, we still hold on tight to this precious pledge of loyalty. 🕯

as doubled: one cycle for the mother, similar to the cycle that follows the birth of a boy; and a second cycle for the daughter, as the second cycle of seven and 33 days takes the place of what would have been *milah* had the infant been a boy.

One of the basic character traits of the Jewish woman is her willingness to subordinate herself to the measure of morality. By contrast, a Jewish man are trained for purity of character through the sign *dai* of *milah*. Now, it appears that the *tumah* and *tahara* laws observed by women serve as equally forceful aids.

On the day of his son’s *bris*, a father fulfills the first of the duties incumbent upon him, and resolves to prepare his son for life: he must train him to walk before Hashem, in complete adherence to the Torah, and through his own conduct he must serve as a role model for his son to emulate in the future. So, too, following the birth of a daughter, the mother’s path to *tahara* is twice as long as it is after the birth of a son, impressing upon her the solemnity and magnitude of her task—to be an example and role model for the Jewish women of the future.

Indeed, the mother’s influence on the moral standards of her daughters is twice as great as that of her sons. With sons, the crucial part of their education comes from the father, as the sons see in him a model for their own future. With daughters, however, the mother is both a role model and a molder of character. Hence, after the birth of a girl, she must doubly prepare herself to ascend the path of purity—for her own sake, and for the sake of her newborn daughter. 🕯

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



## wonder WORLD

### CLEANUP CREW



#### How do vultures prevent diseases from spreading?

Vultures won’t win any beauty contests, and we think of them as opportunistic beasts who feed on dead bodies. But they play an important part in the natural world—as the sanitation workers of the animal kingdom. Vultures are efficient scavengers who can eat anything. Their stomach acid is extremely potent, able to neutralize all the deadly bacteria found in decaying meat, preventing the spread of diseases. Those ugly bald heads are less likely to get infections tangled in them.

Vultures are social creatures who communicate with each other to find food as a team. Hashem has given them an often overlooked but very important role: as the sanitation department of the world. 🕯

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