

# Pulse OF Emunah

ANI  
MAAMIN  
Foundation

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life

LESSONS

## TEACHING BY EXAMPLE

In the late 1990's, a shopping center opened in the city of Chadeira in Eretz Yisrael. One of the establishments was a bowling alley that was to be open on Shabbos.

The local religious community was up in arms and launched a campaign to put an end to the Shabbos desecration, but no amount of letters, protests, or other efforts succeeded in swaying the bowling alley's owners.

Everything changed, though, when a group of children from a Lev L'Achim school for newly religious children held a birthday party in the bowling alley. Their display of proper middos and their heartfelt bentching melted the opposition of the bowling alley's owner, and she ultimately closed her business on Shabbos and enrolled her own child in the school.

Where attempts to educate, persuade, and even protest failed, the example set by a group of children succeeded in penetrating an irreligious woman's emotional armor.

Teaching by example can be many times more powerful than teaching through lectures and speeches. Thus, the *kiddush Hashem* brought about when the Jewish nation follows the Torah can be far greater than the effects of the most massive educational initiative.

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gem

OF THE WEEK

## THE JEWISH NATION IN EXILE

*By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow*

"*V'zacharti es brisi Yaakov, v'afes brisi Yitzchak, v'afes brisi Avraham ezkor, v'haaretz ezkor.*" The names of the Avos in this *pasuk* represent not individuals, but examples of the way Hashem's *brisi* has manifested in our past.

Each of the Avos has a unique *brisi*. We, as their children, are promised that our destiny will also involve changes of fortune, but despite that, we will be the object of Hashem's special hashgacha and guidance. Because we shine among the nations with our self-sacrifice and complete devotion to the mission of mankind, Hashem will transform the darkest night of exile to shining rays of guidance. And like our Avos, we will always remain faithful to G-d's covenant, whether our fate is like Avraham, Yitzchak, or Yaakov.

The *galus* is destined to bring us to ultimate freedom, so, as the *pasuk* indicates, it will develop in reverse order.

First is "*Bris Yaakov*," the years of servitude, in which Hashem's promise sustains us through trials and tribulations. This stage is perhaps behind us.

*continued on reverse side*

powerful  
PRAYER

TEFILLAH: OUR PRIVILEGE  
AS A NATION



Every Jew has been given an amazing privilege: to communicate with the Creator of the Universe. The concept of *tefillah* began with Adam Harishon. Although plants were created on the third day of Creation, they remained beneath the surface of the earth. One more thing was needed: *tefillah*. When Adam was created on the sixth day, he realized that the plants needed rain. So he davened for rain to fall, and then they sprouted forth from the ground. The current structure of Shacharis, Mincha and Maariv originated with the Avos. For as long as we have been a nation, we have held on to *tefillah* as a way of life.

*Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom*

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## A FRIGHTENING PROCESS


By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

In Parshas Bechukosai, we read the blessings that will be showered upon *am Yisrael* when they keep the Torah, and the curses that will befall them if they do not. Rashi interprets the verses of the *tochacha* as follows: There are seven steps in which a person falls completely away from his Creator. It starts when a person does not learn Torah. This will lead to not doing the *mitzvos*, and then to despise those who do keep the Torah. The fourth step is to hate the *chachamim*, then to stop others from doing *mitzvos*. The person will come to deny that *mitzvos* come from Hashem. In the final step, he will deny the existence of a Creator. “The first pulls along the second,” says Rashi, “and so until the seventh.”

These words are astonishing. A person may stay frum for their entire life but never open a *sefer*. There are many non-frum Jews who are respectful of their observant brothers. People who hate rabbis will not necessarily prevent others from doing *mitzvos*. At every stage of deterioration one can find an exception who does not proceed to the next step. How, then, are we to understand Rashi?

It seems that Rashi does not see this progression of stages as occurring within a single individual. Rather, it is a process that takes place over many generations. Learning Torah injects the *neshama* with a passion for *mitzvos*. In a home where there is no Torah, the children’s enthusiasm will diminish. The *mitzvos* will be done perfunctorily, perhaps according to *halacha*, but the heart will not be in it. The grandchildren may be lax or not observant of *mitzvos* at all, even if they are respectful of those who do. If not stopped and brought close, this family can fall further and further.

The Alter of Slabodka once said that if you see a Jewish person stealing apples from a cart, you must realize that his behavior has a history. Perhaps his grandfather used falsehood to hide his good deeds, but the father learned dishonesty and passed off someone else’s Torah thoughts as his own. The grandson, in turn, steals apples from a cart.


A snowball rolling down a hill will pick up more and more snow unless someone interferes. A downward slide in Hashem’s service will continue on and on until something or someone pushes in the opposite direction. May Hashem keep all of us moving upward, becoming better and better people—and may we help others to do the same. 

As Yaakov, we have proved ourselves, inscribing our loyalty to the Torah in blood on the pages of world history.

Next comes the test of the second stage, Bris Yitzchak: to walk free and independent among the nations, not to fear being different and to remain undeterred by envy, to carry on the heritage of Avraham even without suffering, with complete trust that the *brisi* of Hashem will protect us against envy and jealousy.

During the Yaakov period, we endured the hatred of the nations. Now, like Yitzchak, we will suffer their envy. We must learn the second lesson of *galus*, which, given our nature, will not be easy. With growing prosperity, living among nations who waver between acceptance and jealousy, we will have to preserve our unique character. We will have to use all our resources, more than ever before, for a more perfect fulfillment of our unique mission in *galus*, disregarding the envy that isolates us from the rest of the world.

When we have passed the second test and fulfilled the Torah even in prosperity, only then *v’afes brisi Avraham*: we can look forward to the last stage of *galus*, in which we will win the respect of the nations, not despite being Jews, but because we are Jews.

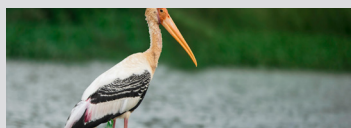
Ultimately, the nations will respect the Jews because we know and observe Hashem’s Torah. Just as Yaakov, who wrestled with the *sar* of Esav, received his blessing at the end of a long struggle, the children of Yaakov and Yitzchak—hated, tolerated and envied—will finally be greeted as the people of the G-d of Avraham: like Avraham, *nasi Elokim*, we will walk with pride among the nations. 

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




## wonder WORLD

### THE TREIFE CHASSID



#### Why are storks not kosher?

Storks are fascinating birds with a unique and beautiful appearance. They are tall and elegant, with a wingspan that can range up to eight feet wide. Hashem designed the stork with long legs, long necks, and slightly curved beaks, perfect for wading in shallow water and reaching down to catch all kinds of prey. Storks live in many types of habitats on every continent but Antarctica.

In Parshas Shemini, the stork is identified as a non-kosher bird, the *chassidah*. It performs acts of kindness for its fellow storks, it does not do the same for other species of birds that are different from itself. Therefore, the *chassidah* is not kosher, in spite of its compassionate-sounding name. 

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