

Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS


INSPIRE BY WIRE

In a city in Israel, a group of people decided to expose certain electricians who were dishonestly inflating their prices at the expense of customers. They secretly wired a home with hidden cameras and instructed the homeowner to plug a sabotaged appliance into an outlet, short-circuiting the entire electrical system of the house. She then called several electricians to fix the “problem.”

The first two electricians did not even bother inspecting the house, instead announcing that the entire system would have to be rewired, to the tune of 2 or 3,000 shekels. But the third electrician, a religious Jew, carefully inspected the house, discovered the appliance, and quickly repaired it. He charged a mere 120 shekels for his services.

The instigators of the scheme emerged from their hiding place and confronted the first two electricians, demanding an explanation for their outrageous quotes. The electricians tried to deny what they had said, but they had been caught on videotape.

Then the men turned to the *frum* electrician and asked why he had not inflated his price as well. He replied simply, “Hashem is watching me, and He will know if I lie! My *parnassah* is decreed on Rosh Hashanah. I cannot change it by being dishonest.”

A prominent kiruv professional related that when the story was made public, the *frum* electrician’s integrity and *emunah* moved an entire family, with whom he had been working for months with little success, to become religious. 

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gem

OF THE WEEK

PREPARING FOR CELEBRATION

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

As we all know, Shavuot is also called *zman Matan Toraseinu*, and indeed, a look at Shemos reveals that Matan Torah occurred on the sixth or seventh day of Sivan—i.e., on or around the 50th day since counting had begun on 16th of Nissan.


We have a tradition that the day of Matan Torah was a Shabbos. According to the Seder Olam, *yetzias Mitzrayim* took place on a Friday. The Gemara (Shabbos 87b), however, says it was Thursday. So only according to the Seder Olam could Matan Torah have taken place on the 50th day—according to the Gemara, which for us is the decisive authority, Matan Torah was in fact on the 51st day. Thus, the 50th day of the Omer is not the anniversary of Matan Torah, but the day before.

Had the Torah intended us to celebrate the day of the month on which the Torah was given, it would have given us the exact date, as it did for Pesach. But this is not the Torah’s intention; hence, *u’krasem b’etzem hayom hazeh*. Do not establish the Yom Tov on the day of the month on which the Torah

continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER 

TEFILLAH:
THE GREAT INSPIRATION

Not only does *tefillah* unify all Jews, it inspires us. The Anshei Knesses Hagedolah wove into the fabric of *tefillah* the principles of *emunah*, the glorious history of *am Yisrael*, the miraculous destiny that awaits us. The *tefillos* mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, *makkas bechoros*, and *krias Yam Suf*. The long-awaited *yemos hamashiach* are frequently mentioned, along with *olam haba* and *techias hameisim*. If we pay attention to the words, we gain real belief and trust in Hashem. People who keep all of the *mitzvos* but do not think about these things are robbed of the sweetness of a full Torah life. All this and more awaits us in the *siddur*. 

Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom

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BODY AND SOUL: A PARTNERSHIP

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

In Parshas Naso, the topic of *nazir* immediately follows that of the *sotah*.

The *sotah* is a woman whose husband suspects her of adultery. The Torah prescribes a miraculous test that establishes her innocence and enables the couple to be reunited. We next learn about the vow of *nezirus*, which prohibits the *nazir* from drinking wine. Chazal tell us that by placing the two sections together, the Torah hints to us that one who witnesses the fate of a guilty *sotah* should take upon himself a vow to become a *nazir*. Exposure to immorality weakens one's resolve against it, and wine causes one to lose self-control.

But this explanation begs the question. The person who witnessed the *sotah's* disgrace also saw the miraculous punishment that befell her. Shouldn't such a person be even more encouraged to refrain from *arayos*?

Herein lies a great lesson. Perhaps we can explain it with a parable. In times gone by, there were traveling *maggidim* who visited towns and lectured the people to improve their ways. Let us imagine that one such *maggid* arrived in a village on *erev Shabbos*. He was invited to speak, but was informed that there was no *shul* or gathering place in the village large enough to hold all of the townsfolk together. The *drasha* would have to take place in the open field outside of town on Sunday morning.

On Sunday morning, just as the *drasha* was about to begin, a man who had been away for Shabbos rode into town on his horse. Realizing that he would not have time to stable his horse before the *maggid* began, he tied it to a tree at the back of the crowd and sat down to listen. The *drasha* was inspiring, peppered with jokes, stories and parables. All the people in attendance were genuinely uplifted. But what about the horse? He was there too. Did he, too, do *teshuvah*? It is a laughable question. Of course the horse learned nothing.

And so it is with one who witnesses the disgrace of the *sotah*. As human beings, we are a mix of the physical and the spiritual. The intellect is a function of the neshama. It sees the punishment and is impressed with the severity of *arayos* and the need to distance oneself. But the body is a creature of the earth, a simple animal that does not understand spiritual messages. It is the horse. It is pulled toward its desires, not away from them.

As we enter the summer, we must keep this message in mind. No matter how strong our *hashkafos* are, we can still struggle with the challenges of *tznius* that exist in the immodest society around us. Strengthening ourselves with inspiration does not always help, because this is not the language of the body. We must find ways to avoid these tests altogether and protect ourselves, understanding this partnership between our bodies and our souls. 🕯

was given; rather, without taking that into account, establish it *b'etzem hayom hazeh*, on the 50th day. The view accepted by the nation is that Shavuot falls on the day before Matan Torah, that Torah was not given on the 50th day, but on the 51st.

From this we learn a profound truth. The Yom Tov of Matan Torah does not celebrate the giving of the Torah. Rather, it celebrates our becoming worthy to receive it. The day before Matan Torah, the last day of preparation, that is the day represented by the 50th day. On that day, the people were ready for their great mission. We can see this in the name of the Yom Tov: Shavuot is not named after the *mitzvos* that apply to it, but after the counting that leads up to it.

Matan Torah, too, was not limited to one day at Har Sinai. The Torah was received over the course of forty years. The Aseres Hadibros heard at Har Sinai have no greater holiness than any of the other 613 commandments.

Hashem Himself explains the significance of the day at Har Sinai: it was only to prove that Hashem does speak to man, so that when we received the Torah through Moshe, it was with full confidence that he spoke the word of Hashem. Thus, the Aseres Hadibros received no special status in *tefillah*, so that one should not imagine that they are the entirety of the Torah. A similar consideration may be the Torah's motive in not designating the day of their giving as a Yom Tov. 🕯

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



wonder WORLD

LEAVING AN IMPRINT



Why would a baby goose follow a person around?

Geese are highly social birds and tend to get along well with other animals. They often form lifelong, loyal couples and are dedicated to their families.

When baby geese, called goslings, hatch from their eggs, they bond to the first moving object they see in the first 24 to 48 hours of life, in a process called imprinting. This is usually its mother, but it could be a person, another animal, or even an inanimate object.

The bond formed during the imprinting period is crucial for the gosling's survival, as it relies on the mother for protection, guidance, and learning essential behaviors. 🕯

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