

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
MAAMIN
Foundation

ISSUE # 376 | PARSHAS PINCHAS

FRIDAY JULY 26TH, 2024 | 21 TAMMUZ, 5784

life

LESSONS

ONE FAMILY


Some of the greatest instances of *kiddush Hashem* emerge from displays of Jewish unity, even on a small level.

Rabbi Naftali Steinfeld (name changed), was once driving near the Verrazano Bridge on a Friday afternoon when he spotted a disabled minivan at the side of the road, with a Jewish family standing beside it. The police had already come to the family's aid, but Rabbi Steinfeld decided to pull over and see if he could be of any assistance.

Since there was only a short time remaining until Shabbos, he offered to drive the man's children to their destination while he finished dealing with the police. The other motorist gratefully accepted the offer.

"Wait a minute," the policeman interjected. "You don't even know this man, and you're going to entrust your kids to him?"

"Why not?" the other Jew grinned, to the policeman's amazement. "After all, we are all one family!"

Let us all be aware of the far-reaching impact of every one of our actions, and be certain that they always reflect properly on Hashem and on His people. 

Reproduced from Living Kiddush Hashem by Rabbi Shraga Freedman with permission of the copyright holders, ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications, Ltd.



gem

OF THE WEEK

BROKEN PIECES

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

The sun is shining and the fields smile with ripening crops, but our gaze is turned to the past. It is thoughts of *churban*—destruction, overthrow and ruin—that sunny Tammuz brings into every Jewish heart.

Many a page of Jewish history has been written in tears, but the most tearstained pages have been those of the Three Weeks. The great tragedies of Jewish history—Nevuchadnetzar, Titus, Ferdinand, Hitler—all chose this period to unfold.

The Three Weeks are a continuation of an ancient tragedy. The *galus* that began with Nevuchadnetzar will not end until the last trace of the doubts that brought it has been overcome.

For this reason, it is not mourning that dominates our remembrance for the *churban*, but fasting—that is, searching our hearts to find our way back, recognizing the causes of our downfall and mustering the energy to eliminate them. This is the task these fast days must strengthen us for.


continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER 

ASHER KIDESHANU:
OUR GREAT PRIVILEGE

Whenever we say a *bracha* for a mitzvah, we are thanking Hashem for raising us above other nations, and making us a holy people by giving us his *mitzvos*.

Some people unfortunately view doing *mitzvos* as they would paying taxes. It is something that they have to do, and when they are done with that, they can get on with their lives.

Every time we say *asher kideshanu b'mitzvosav*, we declare that the *mitzvos* are no burden, but a great privilege. 

Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom

To sponsor a weekly newsletter for \$100,
please email amfmainoffice@gmail.com

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

In Yirmiyahu's very first prophecy, he was told that the punishment of Eretz Yehuda would come from the north, a reference to Nevuchadnetzar, king of Bavel. However, this prophecy was made 21 years before Nevuchadnetzar ever rose to power.

The reigns of the last three kings of Yehuda, in the decades leading up to the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash, were chaotic. Yehoyakim, a vicious *rasha*, sat on the throne for 11 years, committing sins not out of mere appetite but out of spite against Hashem. In the third year of his reign, Nevuchadnetzar became king. A year later, Bavel conquered Yerushalayim and turned Yehuda into a vassal state.

At this time, Yirmiyahu was in prison. He had been arrested for publicly making prophecies that the people did not want to hear. In fact, it was at this very time, in the fourth year of Yehoyakim's reign, that Megillas Eicha was written. Yirmiyahu dictated it to his *talmid* Baruch ben Neriyah from in jail, with the punishments written in the past tense as directed by Hashem. He instructed Baruch to wait until a public fast day, when all the people of the surrounding cities would come to the Beis Hamikdash to daven. Then he was to read the Megillah publicly.

It was a long wait, but finally a public fast was proclaimed due to the impending threat of Nevuchadnetzar. Baruch did as he had been instructed, reading Megillas Eicha to the assembled crowd. Some government ministers were in the crowd, and were frightened by what they heard. Eventually, the Megillah was brought before the king.

The first four *pesukim* made no impact. As the king heard descriptions of the desolation that would befall Eretz Yehuda, he shrugged it off, saying, "I will still be king." The fifth *pasuk*—*hayu tzareha l'rosh*, her enemies will become her master—infuriated him. "So I will not be king anymore?" In his anger, he took a blade and cut up the Megillah, then threw it into the fireplace. He was ready to execute both Yirmiyahu and Baruch.

Sadly, these were the depths of wickedness to which a descendant of David Hamelech had sunk. Although Yehoyakim was more evil than most, the resistance to change and the reluctance to take the *nevi'im* seriously was typical of the generation. It was still 18 years before the *churban*, and there was still time to do teshuvah. 🕯

In general, it is not joyful events that determine our duties. Every trouble that disturbs our lives also presents new openings for the accomplishment of our task. The task remains the same, both for the nation as a whole and for each individual: the observance of the Torah, the fulfillment of the Law transmitted to us at Har Sinai. The only thing that changes with our success or misfortune is the stage on which we play our part. So as long as the *churban* still affects us, we must keep coming together to examine and re-examine our lives in light of the event we are remembering.

"Whenever I visit them, I will visit this sin [Cheit HaEigel] upon them," says G-d. Every future catastrophe is due in part to Cheit HaEigel, and we will have to atone for it. We cannot dare forget it, we cannot dare let the Three Weeks pass without gathering up the fragments of the *luchos* at the foot of the mountain, deciphering the warnings they hold for us.

Shouldn't we seek to find out the source of all our errors, the root of all our suffering? During the Three Weeks, shouldn't we make every effort to discover what has broken our *luchos*, and what we will endure as long as they are broken? 🕯

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



wonder WORLD

FROG FACTS & FEATURES



Why do frogs eat their own skin?

Frogs are fascinating animals, with many quirky features that make them unique. Thanks to their bulging eyes, frogs have excellent night vision and can see in almost all directions—in front, to the side, and even partially behind them. They are carnivores as adults and must eat meat to survive, with a diet that includes insects, small mammals, and even other frogs. Most frogs have teeth, but only on their upper jaw. They use them to hold prey in place until they can swallow it. They evade predators by using their powerful legs to jump great distances. While most frogs have lungs, they can also breathe through their skin, which is essential for their survival in water. They shed their skin about once a week. Sometimes they eat the skin to recycle nutrients! 🕯

Please feel free to take newsletter home to share with your family.

For more information please call (845) 418 2122 or email info@animaamin.org • To subscribe to this newsletter send an email to subscribe@animaamin.org