

# Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS

## IN GOOD FAITH

As the rav of Congregation Zera Avraham of Denver, Rabbi Tzvi Steinberg was well aware of the potential for misunderstandings between the police and his community. Even something as simple as a traffic stop on a Friday afternoon can lead to potential problems, as a Jewish driver might answer a police officer abruptly and anxiously as he watches the minutes ticking away.

Anticipating this, Rabbi Steinberg met with the entire police force to help them understand the culture of religious Jews. He then worked together with a number of officers to put out an educational pamphlet on what to expect when dealing with them.

Police officers in Denver have now learned that a Jew may refuse to sign papers on Shabbos, that a Jew may try to flag down an officer in the street on Shabbos because he is not permitted to use the telephone, and that a Jewish man may turn down a handshake from a female officer without intending to insult her.

And, of course, if a Jewish driver has been pulled over on a Friday afternoon and is acting anxious and rushed, even begging the officer to ticket him as quickly as possible, it is not because he has something to hide: he is simply trying to get home in time for Shabbos.

Without the benefit of this pamphlet, an officer might interpret these actions as rude, disrespectful, and even suspicious. Rabbi Steinberg's goal was to prevent ill will between the police and Jewish citizens.

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gem

OF THE WEEK

## RETURN TO GRACE

*By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow*

After the *luchos* were given for the second time, Klal Yisrael was again commanded to build a Mishkan for them. *Cheit ha'eigel* had jeopardized this command, with far-reaching significance. The Mishkan would now be constructed in the shadow of a completely new experience.

The people now realized how imperfect they still were, how much they needed to work on themselves, how greatly they were in need of atonement. They had experienced a relationship with Hashem in all the severity of His judgment, but also in all the fullness of His grace—from the depths of rejection, to the heights of Divine favor regained.

The Mishkan became the place from which their ideals would shine forth forever to individual and community alike. It was the place where, no matter what error or weakness, they would find renewed strength to work their way up again, to find the strength to persevere in their calling, and find Hashem's help.

Thus, the *cheit ha'eigel* saga was recorded for all time, placed in between *continued on reverse side*

powerful  
PRAYER

EMES V'YATZIV:  
THE GOOD LIFE



In Emes V'yatziv, we declare that the Torah is good. While it asks us to make certain sacrifices, none of them stand in the way of enjoying this world. We must keep all the laws of *kashrus*, but we may eat our fill of infinitely many delicious foods. As long as our clothes are modest and contain no *shatnez*, we are free to dress in fine, dignified styles of any kind. We may own cars, homes, and flourishing businesses. We may marry and raise families. No important or vital experience is withheld from us—and with all this, we can still spend our lives doing *mitzvos* and earning Olam Haba. Indeed, this is *tov v'yafeh!*

*Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom*

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## GENEROSITY OF HEART


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

Unlike other times donations were called for, the Torah did not set any particular amount for the building of the Mishkan; rather, each person gave “according to the generosity of his heart.” And they responded with enthusiasm, to the point where Moshe Rabbeinu had to announce that no more donations were needed. The Torah then goes on to inform us that the jewels needed for the shoulder straps of the *efod* and *choshen* were donated by the *nesi'im*.

Rashi brings a surprising quote: “Rabbi Nosson said, ‘Why did the *nesi'im* donate sacrifices for the *chanukas hamizbei'ach* first, but when it came to building the Mishkan they donated last? The *nesi'im* had said, “Let the community volunteer, and we will fill in whatever is lacking.” Since the community gave everything that was needed, the *nesi'im* wondered what they could give now, and they brought these jewels. Since they were initially lazy, a letter of their name is missing, and the word *nesi'im* is spelled without the *alef*.”


If a shul was conducting a multimillion-dollar building campaign, and a generous soul offered to pay whatever was left after the community donations had finished, it would be a dream for any fundraising executive. And although that is what the *nesi'im* did, Chazal fault them for “laziness.” Surely the *nesi'im* thought that there would be a huge deficit. There was no reason to assume Klal Yisrael would overwhelm Moshe with material for the entire building and more. Their pledge had demonstrated great generosity of heart. So why are they faulted? Where is the laziness?

The Mesilas Yesharim tells us that a person who is truly on fire in the service of Hashem will never be lazy in the performance of His *mitzvos*. A person is only lazy about something for which he lacks enthusiasm—if it has meaning to him, he rushes to make every effort and get it done.

The *nesi'im* were undoubtedly very generous in pledging to cover the entire deficit. But what if there had been no deficit? What would have been left for them? They should have first given whatever would be considered a proper donation for someone of their stature, and promised in addition to cover the deficit. They took the chance, risking their share in building the Mishkan. It is this lack of enthusiasm that Chazal describe as laziness. Hence, a letter was deleted from their title: to teach us how excited we must be to do Hashem’s will. 

the command to build the Mishkan and the execution of that command. It provides documented proof that it is possible to be forgiven, no matter what.

But the most important point to consider is this: the greatest national crime was committed, and the highest grace was attained from G-d—without a sanctuary, and without *korbanos*. If any more proof were needed that the Mishkan and *korbanos* in and of themselves do not secure G-d’s favor, but are only guides to attain His grace, such proof is found in these events.

In Pekudei, the precious metals used in this *mishkan* are totaled. The amount pales in comparison to the treasures used for the Beis Hamikdash later on; nevertheless, neither Beis Hamikdash became as great as the Mishkan. Only in the Mishkan did the Shechinah appear for all to see, only the Mishkan never fell into the hands of an enemy. The second Beis Hamikdash, despite all its splendor, lacked even the primary *aron* and the *urim v'tumim*. Grandeur means little to the essence of a *mishkan*. 

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




## wonder WORLD

### MATERIAL BENEFITS



#### *Why are some things better for building?*

In Vayakhel-Pekudei, Bnei Yisrael build the Mishkan using many different materials: gold, silver, copper, wood, wool, and linen, each one with a special purpose. Different materials have different properties. Metals like gold and copper are strong and flexible, able to be shaped into thin sheets or wires without breaking. Wood is lighter and easier to carve, but still sturdy enough to hold weight. Fabrics like wool and linen are soft and flexible, making them useful for coverings and garments. Some materials bend without breaking, some resist rust, and others insulate against heat or cold. Builders choose materials based on what job they need the material to do. Part of the wisdom of the Mishkan was to use each material for the role it could perform best. 

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