

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
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life

LESSONS

AMBASSADORS

By Rabbi David Ashear, Author of *Living Emunah* (Artsroll)

Ahavas Hashem is one of the primary sources for the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem. The Gemara (Yoma 86a) quotes a beraita that infers from, “V’ahavta es Hashem Elokecha” that one should cause Hashem’s Name to be beloved by others.


Rav Dessler taught his talmidim to actively seek out opportunities for kiddush Hashem. One talmid, when boarding a bus, sat where the conductor would not reach before his stop; he made a point of handing his fare to another passenger to pay before disembarking. Another talmid walked down a street frequented by beggars and gave a coin to each one. In all likelihood, Rav Dessler’s intent was not only to promote kavod shamayim, but also to inculcate in his talmidim a crucial sensitivity to Hashem’s honor.

A frum father was once sitting in a parked car with his children when one of the younger ones had a temper tantrum. As he kicked and screamed hysterically, the man’s eight-year-old son suddenly began shouting, “Close the windows! Close the windows!”

“Why do you want the windows closed?” the father asked. “It’s warm in the car!”

“I don’t want his crying to make a chillul Hashem,” the child said. “There are people passing by.”

We must always be aware that we are walking advertisements, wherever we go, in everything we do. Cultivating this awareness helps us develop empathy and respect for all human beings.

It reminds us that we do not live in a bubble, that our words and actions have repercussions, providing us and our children with a sense of pride, along with the knowledge that we are living with a mission that transcends ourselves. 



gem

OF THE WEEK

FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

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

In Parshas Pinchas, it says in the first month, of the fourteenth day, is a Pesach dedicated to Hashem. Fire offerings of two young bulls, a ram, and seven yearling sheep were brought along with fine flour mixed with oil. and *korbanos* were brought for a seven day period.


“On the seventh day, there shall be a *mikra kodesh*; you must not do any *melachos*” On this day you shall cease from all creative work of earthly service, and you are called unto Hashem and His Sanctuary. All the ideas and resolves acquired and reinforced under the influence of the seven days of the festival shall be collected and assimilated, and Hashem’s Sanctuary will send home all visitors to His House with a rich treasure of life.

After this festival of freedom has passed, you will finally have reached the day that inaugurates the season of the *yom habikkurim* (day of first fruits), the season in which you will be permitted to bring the first fruits of the year and lay them before Hashem’s *mizbeach*. *continued on reverse side*

powerful
PRAYER

MIZMOR LESODAH:
JEWISH PRIVILEGE



In this perek, Dovid Hamelech tells us to “serve Hashem with happiness, and come before Him with rejoicing.” Sometimes this is difficult to put into practice. However, if we sometimes feel that our service of Hashem is a burden, it is because we lack the maturity to appreciate the great favor He has done by allowing us to serve him. We don’t perform mitzvos as a burden or an obligation—it is a great privilege to be able to speak to Hashem in prayer, study His Torah, and keep His commandments. 

Adapted from Biur Tefillah (Ani Maamin Foundation)

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THE EMUNAH IN MAAMID HAR SINAI

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

The following paragraphs are an excerpt from the manuscript of a new book, **Questions Deserve Answers**, which I hope to publish soon, *b'ezras Hashem*. "Hardly anything could be more important in the life of a Jew than the knowledge that the *Mesorah* that has been handed down to us is the absolute truth, in exclusion of all others. There is a *Ribono shel Olam*, Who personally spoke to us and gave us His Torah at *Har Sinai*. He is in total control of the whole world, and all our actions make a difference, with no competition from contradictory beliefs, all of which are as false as can be. This has been our *emunah* for over three thousand years, We lived by it, we died for it, and we will never forsake this *emunah*.

But we live in a very confused world, one that has been turned upside down with nonsensical notions of all sorts, supported by endless propaganda. In such an atmosphere it is most difficult to maintain the clarity in *emunah* required to be a confident believer in all the above. Hence, the passionate fervor of *emunah* is hard to find. Many harbor doubts and questions that we may not have heard some decades ago. Those who have no such questions may nevertheless lack the clarity and conviction in the basics of *emunah*, but merely go through life robotically, without ever dwelling on such vital matters.

Gedolei hador throughout the generations have predicted that the greatest test in the era just prior to *Mashiach* will be the difficulty to maintain *emunah*.

The story of Eliyahu at Har Carmel, as told in the book of Melachim. The kingdom of the Ten Tribes, under the influence of King Achav and Queen Izevel, had been worshipping the Baal. Eliyahu Hanavi proclaimed a drought, then disappeared into hiding for two and a half years. The people suffered terribly for lack of sufficient water.

When Eliyahu returned, he instructed the wicked Achav to command the nation that, if they wanted water, everyone must gather at Har Carmel, where a test would demonstrate once and for all whether the Baal or *Hashem* is the true God. The prophets of the Baal would offer a *korban*, and so would Eliyahu. Whichever *korban* would be answered with fire from heaven would indicate the true deity. The multitudes welcomed this test, because they were indeed very confused. The prophets of the Baal beseeched their god, but of course there was no response. Eliyahu offered his *korban* and then *davened* to *Hashem*, to prove His existence and His power. A fire then descended from Heaven to consume his offering. The people fell down and cried out, "*Hashem* is G-d, *Hashem* is G-d."

It is said in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, as well as in the name of Rav Elchanan Wasserman, that prior to the arrival of *Moshiach* the *emunah* test will be so great, that it will seem as though, in that ancient story, the fire had skipped over Eliyahu's *korban* and burned the offering of the Baal. Who, then, would have declared *Hashem* to be the true G-d?? So, today, we are being flooded with a constant torrent of propaganda and atheistic theories. Even Jews who are still *maaminim* will lack the fervor, the passion and clarity of true *emunah*. In the *ikvesa d'meshicha*, (the period just prior to *Moshiach*'s arrival), our test will be to stand up for our faith against the contemporary equivalents of the Baal, and nevertheless cry out with all our hearts, "*Hashem* is G-d, *Hashem* is G-d."

A similar prediction is quoted in the name of the Rizhiner Rebbe. Prior to *Mashiach*'s coming, he says, the world will seem as if a rope was tied taught around the entire globe. That will be the rope of *emunah*. Everyone will have to take hold of the rope. *Hashem* will shake the rope vigorously, and only the strongest will be able to hold on and survive. Such will be the *nisayon* of the final generations before *geulah*."

So many of our people have become estranged from their heritage. Our job is to strengthen our faith, acknowledge *Hashem* under all circumstances, and hold on tight to the rope of *emunah*.

In that time, you shall acknowledge that Hashem has kept his promise and blessed your land, as a result of your entering into the *bris* of His Torah.

At the beginning of this season, before you bring near to Hashem any homage offering from the new grain, you shall bring to His Sanctuary *shtei halechem*, the two leavened loaves of wheat bread, representing the independence that is befitting for man, which is promised to every member of the people of the Torah if he keeps Hashem's Torah

This day will fall upon the completion of your weeks, which you counted from the freedom and independence you attained. These weeks are not the ripening of the harvests, but *shevasichem*, your weeks.

It is you who are to mature spiritually and morally to become the receivers and bearers of the Torah. On this day you shall cease from all creative work of earthly service, and you shall again be called to Hashem's service in His Sanctuary.

By bringing offering to Hashem: bulls, a ram, and sheep, along with flour and oil to express compliance, you shall approach Hashem with the ideal expression of your calling, which springs from all these relationships.

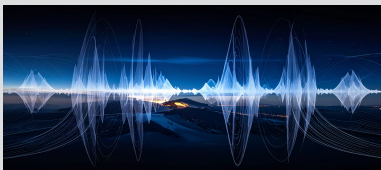
Through the power of this calling, the life of every individual will be devoted to the active service of Hashem; the nation as a whole will become an illuminating model for the nations; Jewish history will open the eyes of mankind to see Hashem's works; your existence, prosperity, and happiness will be sanctified, so that they offer homage to Hashem.

Out of the imperfection of every contemporary time, a gate will be opened to a new and pure future.



wonder WORLD

SOUND TRIGGERING SIGHT



Can you see sounds?

At *Matan Torah*, in Parshas Yisro, it says: "*V'chol ha'am ro'im es ha'kolos*" — "And all the nation saw the sounds." Rashi explains that this seeing was literal. "They saw what was audible."

2% to 4% of the population have a condition called Synesthesia, where stimulating one sense automatically activates another sense in the brain. Different sounds trigger them to see specific colours or textures, and some see the colours projected externally as if they were floating in front of them, while others only see these colours mentally. When a person with Synesthesia hears a sound, the neuron sending the signal to the auditory cortex also triggers the visual cortex. This causes the person to perceive a specific, consistent colour associated with that sound. Having Synesthesia can actually improve memory and enhance overall sensory processing. Thousands of years before modern science identified Synesthesia, the Jewish nation experienced its peak expression. At *Har Sinai*, this rare neurological phenomenon became a universal reality, allowing an entire people to literally see the sounds of the Divine.