

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
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Foundation

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life

LESSONS

CELEBRATION POWER

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

Michtav Me'Eliyahu likens the heart to an unplowed field. To yield crops, it must be softened. The heart is naturally apathetic, resistant to inspiration. For an experience to affect it, it must be made receptive.

There are two ways to “soften” the heart: via tragedy, or via physical enjoyment. When one enjoys good food or other pleasures, his heart becomes more impressionable. This is why we celebrate Shabbos and Yom Tov with lavish meals. Good food opens our hearts to an emotional connection with Hashem.

This is true only when the food is used as a tool. When enjoyment is an end in itself, it inspires a person only to increase pursuit of *gashmiyus*. For crops to grow, one must first sow the seeds.

The Yeshiva of West Bloomfield recently celebrated a *hachnasas sefer Torah*. Afterwards, the *menahel* received an e-mail from an English teacher. “Never have I experienced such warmth in religion,” he wrote. “If the Catholicism of my youth had a fraction of this joy, I might have stayed with it longer.”

A *baal teshuvah* in Israel related his inspiration. “There was a *hachnasas sefer Torah* in Tel Aviv,” he said. “It was met by a group of protesters, including me. I was shocked at the excitement and happiness it exuded. I had always viewed the Torah as restrictive and inconvenient. Once I saw another side, I had to investigate further, and I discovered its beauty.”

Sometimes a simple celebration can be the source of tremendous *kiddush Hashem*—and if connected to a *mitzvah*, it can soften even an impervious heart. 



gem

OF THE WEEK

RESTORING THE BALANCE

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

After Pinchas’ violent act, Hashem promises him, in verse 12, a “covenant of peace.” This seems contradictory, but it is not. Here we see that the creation of the ultimate harmony of peace is entrusted by Hashem to the spirit and actions that thoughtless people, anxious to mask their passivity and neglect of duty as “love of peace,” would label as “disturbing the peace.”

Peace is a precious thing that requires us to be willing to sacrifice everything—all of our rights and possessions—but never the possessions or rights of others, and never sacrificing what Hashem has said is good and true.

There can only be true peace among people if we are at peace with Hashem and His commandments. Someone who dares to struggle against those who go against what is good and true in the eyes of Hashem is, by this very struggle, one of the fighters for the covenant of *shalom* on earth.

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powerful
PRAYER



HASHIVA SHOFTEINU:
MAINTAINING ORDER

One of the sins mentioned numerous times by the Neviim is that of not seeking justice in *beis din* for those who cannot defend themselves.

The Navi Yeshaya advises us, “*Shiftu yasom; rivu almana*”—seek justice for the orphan, argue on behalf of the widow. Judging fairly maintains order in the world. It was up to the Sanhedrin to see that this was done. It is this that we daven for in *Hashiva Shofteinu*.

Adapted from Biur Tefillah (Ani Maamin Foundation)



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THE WONDERS OF CREATION

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

Last week we wrote that the complexity and preciseness of everything in the universe demonstrate inescapable evidence of an infinitely intelligent Creator.

Every such presentation leaves the students totally astounded.

When they are told that when they stand in front of the prescription counter in the local drug store, and see hundreds of bottles of pills, that everything those pills do, is done in the body naturally.

Only when the body is malfunctioning and needs an adjustment that's when are those pills are needed, they are actually a walking pharmacy. The human liver weighs about three pounds. It performs five hundred different functions in the body. Is it possible that this could have come about by some accident?

The DNA molecule in each cell is the blueprint not only for that cell, but indeed for every one of a person's 60 trillions cells, can we imagine that they will leave the lecture thinking that it is all the result of nature? Yes, there are people who have made up their minds to remain in denial no matter what evidence is shown to them. They don't want a Creator in their lives telling them what to do.

Our youth, however, our youth have no such agenda. They are actually longing to hear the substantiation of the *emunah*, so that then they know that everything they have been taught is the absolute truth *To be continued.*

KAVOD SHOMAYIM

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

This coming Sunday, a parade will take place here in Toronto, that will draw a crowd of a million people to celebrate what the Ribono shel Olam calls "an abomination." Jewish organizations and many individual Jews will also participate.

Such parades have recently been held in Eretz Yisroel as well. When a rebellion against *Kavod Shomayim* of such proportions take place, the least we must do is not allow it to desensitize ourselves.

This happens by allowing it to pass by without arousing in our hearts a sadness over the trampling on the *Kavod* of *שבשמים*, and the horrendous state of detachment of so many of our Jewish brothers and sisters from their three thousand year heritage. *יהי רצון שירבה כבוד שמים דעת אלקים בארץ*

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However, someone who, for the sake of "keeping the peace," keeps his mouth closed and does not protest, allowing others to stir up trouble with Hashem because of their "love for peace," actually joins with the troublemakers who are the true enemies of peace, and is instrumental in destroying peace.

What saved Am Yisroel was not the inaction of the masses, or even the sorrowful tears of those who stood idly by at the entrance of the mishkan. It was the brave act of Pinchas that saved the people and restored them to peace with Hashem and His law, which re-established the basis for true peace. In Malachi 2:5, Hashem calls the bris entrusted to the Levi'im a covenant of "life and peace," because "the fear that he had was solely the fear of Me, and he bowed his head first and foremost before My Name."

But the vav of Shalom is a broken vav, symbolizing the broken peace between man and Hashem. This shows us that the covenant of Pinchas is shalom restored to completeness. In situations where the zeal of Pinchas is required, peace has been broken, and the struggle of Pinchas is to restore true peace. He fights so that the shalom becomes shaleim. Halacha, as outlined in Kiddushin 66b, attaches to this the law that says a baal mum who performs an avodah makes the avodah pasul.

As it says here of Pinchas attaining kehuna, "he who wishes to restore the peace with Hashem that has been broken, which is what every avodah symbolizes, must himself be shaleim," and in his shleimus, he restores shalom.



wonder WORLD

CHAOS OF PEACE



Can a person have disturbing peace?

It is the coldest day of winter, and you step outside and immediately begin shivering. Your muscles begin to rapidly, violently, and involuntarily contract and relax. To an outside observer, shaking and shivering looks chaotic, violent, and "disturbed." It is a massive expenditure of energy that seems to derail your peaceful existence. Yet, what is actually happening is your body restoring peace! The rapid muscle contractions generate friction, which generates heat, raising your core temperature back into the safe zone. The violence was required to restore your body's internal peace