

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
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life

LESSONS

DISCIPLINE & DIGNITY II

Reproduced from "Living Kiddush Hashem" by Rabbi Shraga Freedman, with permission of ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications.

The disciplined Jewish lifestyle often makes an impression on the secular world. Rav Tzvi Steinberg, rav of Khal Zera Avraham of Denver, discovered this at a meeting with the Denver police force. Every year, he is invited to give a presentation about the Orthodox Jewish community. To foster greater understanding among the police, Rav Steinberg has written a booklet explaining our culture and values.

An officer had once responded to a car alarm on a Friday night. The alarm had prevented the theft, but the car window was open, and the officer realized that the owner was unaware of the attempt.

He knocked on the owner's door, and an Orthodox Jew answered. The man thanked the officer profusely, then added, "Would you mind covering the car window with a plastic sheet for me? I don't want the inside to get wet from the rain."

When the officer recounted this incident to Rav Steinberg at the annual presentation, he said,

"At first, I was indignant. It isn't my job to cover someone's car, and I felt it wasn't appropriate that he had asked me to do that.

"But then I remembered your booklet, and what you explained about Shabbos, and I realized that he probably wasn't able to do it himself."



gem

OF THE WEEK

FOREVER ALIVE

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

In Parshas Va'eschanan 4:9, we are commanded to "...guard your soul exceedingly, so that you do not forget the facts that your own eyes have seen, and so that they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life..." The whole of *Yiddishkeit* rests on one core truth: that the entire nation itself witnessed the Divine revelation of the Torah.

This establishes, without a doubt, the origin of the Torah and that Hashem is supernatural. That is why, above all else, this knowledge must remain alive forever in our hearts and minds and must be handed down to our children so that they can also take it to heart and pass it on to future generations. Non-Jews approach history and nature while missing two fundamental facts. They do not understand the existence of one sole, supernatural, personal G-d, and they cannot comprehend the simultaneous national revelation of the Torah.

However, whenever we investigate nature and history, we base our arguments on the truth we know from our own experience, and make this the starting point for our whole exploration.

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powerful
PRAYER



AL HATZADDIKIM:
WHY WE NEED THEM

The Jewish people need guidance. In this *bracha*, we ask Hashem to preserve our *tzaddikim* for us, and to let us be connected to their way of life, to "place our lot with theirs" and let it be known that those who trust in Hashem are rewarded with His favor.

When Avraham Avinu *davened* to Hashem not to destroy Sodom, he was told that if fifty *tzaddikim* could be found there, Hashem would spare the entire city for their sake. The good deeds of a *tzaddik* are a *zechus* for the world. In this *bracha*, we pray that Hashem let them live and be well for a long time.

Adapted from Biur Tefillah (Ani Maamin Foundation)

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NEVER LOSE HOPE

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

After Tisha B'Av, we immediately begin a seven week period of *tanchumin* leading up to Rosh Hashana. The Navi Yeshaya was given the task to be the *navi* of comforting the Jewish people, so we will read seven *haftaros* from Sefer Yeshaya. What is the message of *nechama*? The glorious future that awaits the Klal Yisroel when the *geulah* finally comes. Rely on no one but Hashem, Whose word stands for ever.

After the message about the future, the *navi* discusses the foolish idol worshipers of his time. He tells us to pay attention to the expanses of the earth, and realize that there is a Creator. That we who live on His earth are like mere grasshoppers. Hashem stretched out the heavens like a curtain which hangs over us like a tent. Furthermore, he says, "Lift up your eyes on high and see Who created these. Who brings out their hosts by number and calls each one by name." He is the all powerful one that set each in its place, calls them all by name, and does not leave out a single one.

People once thought that the only stars in existence are the ones that are visible in the night sky. Now we know that there are trillions upon trillions. It need not take more than a look up at the sky to realize that the world has an infinite Creator.

This is the message of comfort. The Klal Yisroel went through unbelievable punishments for their sins. They could easily have become distressed and given up hope. The navi says "No!" You will survive, no matter what. You can accomplish even in the limited opportunities available before Mashiach comes. Keep your awareness of the Creator constantly on your mind.

This is the way of the Am Yisroel. They don't close up shop after a *churban*. They set themselves to the task of revival. They build *yeshivos*, and produce a new crop of *talmidei chachomim*. They rebuild their lives and create outstanding communities. This is precisely what our people have done throughout history, time and time again. Even when the wicked of Yisroel endeavor to uproot the Torah completely, somehow the Ribono shel Olam helps us pull through.

Such is Yeshaya's message. Keep going. Never give up. The One Who is almighty will see to it that you will succeed, in spite of all the hardships. Take heart and move on 🕯

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In the midst of a world caught up in ideas whose foundation is shaky, we need to maintain our own intellectual independence. That shaky foundation makes their theories fundamentally flawed, and any conclusions they may make are also flawed. If you pay attention to them, you run the risk of forgetting the realities you have learned from our generational experience, which are the only realities that can be used to derive truths about life and existence.

We must be careful not to forget the facts that our own eyes have beheld! Above all, *shamor nafshecha me'od*! The un-Jewish view of nature and history may much too easily worm its way into our own hearts and speak against what we already know. Once Hashem is no longer seen as integral to natural life, man's passions and urges dominate him and become like a god to him.

If Torah is banished from history, self-seeking, brutal man sees himself as the sovereign ruler of the world. This is very appealing to a person's base nature. They promise "free love" and take away the need to ensure justice and loving-kindness in the way we deal with others.

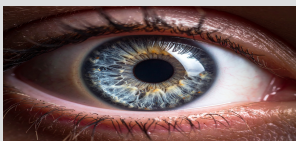
Because of this allure, we need to guard against non-Jewish influences both externally and from the inner temptations of our own sensuality and selfishness. We must guard our souls so that we do not forget the facts that vouch for Hashem and His Torah. Above all, we must guard the spiritual aspect of our nature so that we do not lose sight of the facts that our own eyes, and those who came before us, have seen.

Just as we are obligated to keep the realities that we experienced constantly in mind, we cannot let them leave our hearts, not even for a moment—for that is the purpose of the experience itself. It is not enough that we keep them in our hearts at certain stages in life, or at special times of spiritual height; instead, we need to keep them in our hearts *kol yimei chayeicha*. We must let them guide our hearts, the very seat of all premeditated actions 🕯



wonder WORLD

PERFECT INSTRUMENT



How many different colours can the eye see with only three receptors?

The human eye is an unmatched marvel of biological engineering. Composed of over two million working parts, it operates with a degree of structural harmony and complexity that challenges the concept of accidental origin. While modern science spends billions attempting to develop high-end cameras and digital sensors, the human visual system surpasses them in nearly every regard. It focuses faster and adapts to changing environments in ways photographers can only dream of. Furthermore, with only three types of color receptors—red, green, and blue—we can distinguish over ten million different colours. In fact, roughly 70% of all the body's sensory receptors are located in the eyes. It is not merely an organ; it is a perfectly tuned instrument built to perceive the world around us 🕯