

Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS

AVOIDING SUSPICION

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

An elderly couple wanted to bequeath their entire estate, which was worth a considerable sum, to a struggling *yeshivah* in Yerushalayim after their deaths. The *rosh yeshivah*, however, suggested that the couple leave half of their estate to their only son, who lived abroad and had severed his ties with them.

The wife passed away shortly thereafter, and the husband's health deteriorated; he needed constant care until his death a few years later. The *yeshivah* shouldered the burden of all the funeral and medical expenses, while the son remained out of contact, not even attending his mother's funeral.

After the husband's death, the couple's estranged son finally came to Eretz Yisrael—to claim his parents' entire estate. The *yeshivah* administration urged the *rosh yeshivah* to fight in court, but the *rosh yeshivah*, an august Torah personality, flatly refused, fearing the *chillul Hashem* that might result.

The son was certain to resist any efforts the *yeshivah* might make to stake a claim to the estate. He would be very likely to fabricate accusations, perhaps claiming that the *yeshivah* had somehow convinced the couple to write a will in their favor and that they had aided his father for ulterior motives, in order to be able to claim his property. The situation was liable to turn into a scandal, besmirching the *yeshivah's* name and that of the Torah world.

For that, the *rosh yeshivah* was willing to forego a vast sum of money that could have rescued his struggling institution from financial distress. 



gem

OF THE WEEK

THE EARTH IS NOT FOREVER

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

"*Bereishis bara elokim....*" the word *reishis* means a beginning of movement in time, not in space. Our verse is stating that "From the very beginning G-d created the heaven and the earth." Nothing existed prior to Hashem's act of creation, and that heaven and earth were created only through Hashem's Word. The basis of the conviction that the Torah seeks to instill within us is that the world was brought into existence from nonexistence.

The opposite notion of this is the belief in the eternity of the world, which is the cornerstone of pagan belief until this very day. It is a falsehood and misrepresentation of the origin of the universe. If matter existed before Creation, then the Creator of the universe would build the best world possible with the limitations of the material, not a world that was absolutely good.

In that case, all natural and moral evil would be due to the inherent faultiness of the material, and not even Hashem would be able to save the world from evil. Further, He would not be master over the material of the world, and man not the master of his body.

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powerful
PRAYER



RETZEI: ANY
DAY NOW

Our *neviim* have told us not to remain silent. We constantly ask Hashem for the return of the *Beis Hamikdash* and *malchus* Beis David. When we say *Retzei*, we are adding our *tefillah* to the millions that our ancestors prayed before us.

The last era before *Mashiach* is called the *ikvesa D'meshicha*, the footsteps of *Mashiach*—so close we can almost hear them. We are now in that time, awaiting the *geulah* any day. We should put extra effort into this *tefillah*; it is so close to being answered 

Adapted from Biur Tefillah (Ani Maamin Foundation)

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A TOOL IN HASHEM'S HAND

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

This past week, many gatherings took place to commemorate the tragedy of October 7, three years ago. Many *azkaros* were said for the *neshamos* of those who were martyred, and *tefillas* for those who have been injured. They spoke about the atrocities committed by Hamas and their co-terrorists. I feel a need to share a very fundamental message, which is oftentimes overlooked. I hope that every one of the *chashuva* readers will take time to ponder and internalize this thought.

Let us first go back in history, as if in a time machine. Imagine that that we are living in the land of Yehuda some 2,580 years ago. The Ten Tribes of Israel have just been exiled by Sancheriv, the king of Ashur. Thousands were murdered during the conquest, and the remainder were forced to go into exile. (We know not quite to where they were taken, and where their descendants are now). After his victory in the North, Sancheriv conquered all the fortified cities of Eretz Yehuda. He was extremely arrogant, and attributed all his successes to his might and wisdom. (He finally met his downfall when his armies surrounded Yerushalayim, and a *malach* was sent to destroy his whole army.) Sancheriv was the arch enemy of the Jewish people. His soldiers surely committed their share of atrocities, and he was the current day nemesis of the Jewish people. Our hatred of him knew no bounds.

One of the thirteen principles of faith is that we must believe all the words of the prophets. So let us hear what the great *novi* Yeshaya had to say about Sancheriv and his arrogance, in the name of Hashem. "Woe Ashur! The staff of My anger." Ashur is nothing but a *weapon in Hashem's hand* when he is angry at His people. Later in the same chapter: "Can the axe be arrogant over the one who chops with it? Can the sickle make itself great over the one who waves it on the grain?" Ashur was naught but a tool in Hashem's hand, when His divine wisdom decreed that His people needed to be punished.

One more excerpt from Tanach: Yirmiyahu said in Hashem's name that "Nevuchadnetzar, *My servant*" would rule over Eretz Yehuda and all the surrounding nations. Only those who would accept his yoke of authority would escape. Whoever would not shall perish. The last king of Yehuda, Tzidkiyahu Hamelech, rebelled and made an alliance with Egypt. The Egyptians were coming in boats on the Yam Suf to assist. When the Babylonians heard that Egypt was coming, they let up the siege around Yerushalayim and went back to Bavel.

Can you imagine what a *yom tov* it must have been in Yerushalayim? But it was not to be. Hashem "hinted to the *Yam*, and it floated up gourds that looked like human innards. The Egyptians reminded themselves of their ancestors who drowned in the Yam Suf because of Am Yisroel, and they turned around. Yirmiyahu *Hanovi* came to Tzidkiyahu and told him that his allies were not coming and the Babylonians would come back, "Even if only a few wounded soldiers will remain, they will rise up and burn the city."

When Hashem has an agenda, numbers and might mean nothing. Only His will shall prevail. Hamas is no different than Sancheriv or any of the other historical enemies of the Jewish people. We need to do our human effort, but what Hashem wants from us is *teshuva*. And that was His message to us on that notorious October seventh day! 🔥

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Freedom would vanish, and the whole world, including its G-d and the men who live in it, would be propelled by a blind, unalterable fate. This incredibly bleak concept of Hashem is dispelled by the light of Torah with its very first words *bereishis bora elokim*! Everything that follows hinges on these words.

Hashem rules freely over His world, and He has made man master over his small world. We have a spark of His Own free essence, so that we should master our body and its forces. Hashem created us in His image and placed us in a world governed by His omnipotence.

The world with all its seeming flaws, corresponds to the wise plan of the Creator. Likewise, man who was created *bereishis* — with all his moral shortcomings and possibilities of sinning — has the ability to attain the moral perfection set before him by the Creator.

Both the world and man will reach the highest ideal of the good, for which both were created because Hashem has placed this goal before them.

There is a dual nature of man, containing the heavenly and earthly, the eternal and the transient, *yetzer tov* and *yetzer rah*, he was created for *olam hazeh* and *olam habah*.

Man always has a double image, one predominant in actuality and the other is always present potentially. Even a lofty person still belongs to the earth, and in a lowly person the human spark has not been extinguished. The loftiest deed is preceded by an inner struggle, and the same applies to the deeds of the *yetzer rah*.

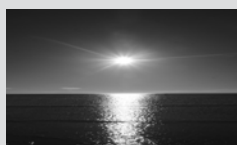
The Sages enlighten us about the nature of man — that from the beginning of time we were formed for these two impulses, yet every *yetzer* is holy and pure. He Who formed the *yetzer tov* also formed the *yetzer rah*.

Man contains Divine light and material energy, not a *malach*, but a *adam*. Our primary place is *olam hazeh* not *olam habah*; his duty is to carry out his godly moral task, with his physical nature, in this material world 🔥



wonder WORLD

SUN ENERGY



Would the people of the world survive if all algae disappeared?

You might recognize them from the surface of a stagnant pond. Algae are similar to plants in that they take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen, using energy from the sun to produce food via photosynthesis. However, they lack the major features of plants, such as roots, stems, and leaves.

Algae produce over half of the oxygen on earth, enabling us to breathe! If all the algae were gone, first much of the world's marine life would die as their environment became full of carbon dioxide. Then the shortage would reach the shore, and many land dwellers—including us—would suffer 🔥

Adapted from Fundamentals of Life Science by Rabbi Yaakov Lubin