

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
MAAMIN
Foundation

ISSUE # 441 | PARSHAS MISHPATIM

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13TH, 2026 | 27 SHEVAT, 5786

life

LESSONS

WINNING THE LOTTERY

Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib is the rav of Congregation Zichron Eliezer of Cincinnati, Ohio. He was once on a plane seated next to an elderly man named Jeremy, who asked him, "Do you live on Farm Acres?" Farm Acres is a street in the Jewish area of Cincinnati.

"Actually, I do," the rabbi said. "How did you know?"

Years earlier, Jeremy had lived on the same street. He was Jewish, but not religious. The two men chatted about the neighborhood and its changes. "By the way," Jeremy asked, "do you know Mark Moskowitz?"

"Certainly," Rabbi Weinrib replied. "I learn with him as a study partner."

"You are the rabbi Mark talks about!" Jeremy exclaimed. "He's always begging me to learn with him and his rabbi, and now here we are on a plane!"

Rabbi Weinrib invited the older man to join their regular learning sessions, and within a few weeks he did.

The odds of those two men in adjacent seats on the same flight were as low as the odds of winning the lottery. But we do not live in a world that follows the laws of probability. *Emunah* teaches us that nothing happens by chance. Whenever we cross paths with someone or find ourselves in a particular place, it may very well be a Divinely sent opportunity for *kiddush Hashem*. If we stay on the lookout for those opportunities, we will be able to make the most of them when they arise. 

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gem

OF THE WEEK

COUNTED BY G-D

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

In every count, things are categorized under one common concept. *Pekudei bnei Yisrael* are all those who are categorized as *bnei Yisrael*, in whom the idea of "*bnei Yisrael*" is embodied. The moment someone is counted among them, he learns to value himself as a *ben Yisrael*. At that moment, he is called upon to learn a lesson.

Not by his mere existence, by living for himself, is there meaning to his soul, and not by his mere existence does he become an integral part of a nation. Only one who gives is counted; only one who contributes gains the right to go on; only one who does what is required of him has a rightful place in the community of his nation. Only one who makes his contribution is entitled to be counted in the numbers of the Children of Israel. The moment he seeks to be counted without making a contribution—at that moment he forfeits his right to exist.

But who can contribute and meet his obligation so completely that he can claim for himself the right to exist for even one minute? Where is the *continued on reverse side*

powerful
PRAYER 

VAYOMER: REMEMBRANCE
BY DAY AND NIGHT

There is a mitzvah to mention Yetzias Mitzrayim in the morning and at night. For that reason, we recite the *parsha* of Vayomer as part of Krias Shema, because the last *pasuk* mentions Yetzias Mitzrayim.

Krias Shema is a very suitable opportunity to mention Yetzias Mitzrayim. Just as Shema declares our acceptance of the yoke of Hashem and His mitzvos, so too does remembrance of Yetzias Mitzrayim remind us that when Hashem redeemed us from slavery, we became His servants. 

Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom

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WHO WROTE THE CHUMASH?

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

About twelve years ago, one of my grandsons received his first Chumash. He was in first grade, and the yeshiva sent me a beautiful photo of a beaming youngster holding his brand-new Chumash, the *menahel* on one side, the rebbi on the other. As a proud Zaidy, I called to wish him *mazal tov*. “Avi,” I asked him, “do you know who wrote the Chumash?”

“Was it you?” he asked.

“No!” I said. “When Tatty takes you to shul, they take out a Sefer Torah. The words in the Chumash are the same ones in the Sefer Torah, the words that Hashem told Moshe to write.”

My next phone call was to Avi’s phenomenal first-grade rebbi. Somehow, the most important point had escaped him: that the Chumash is from Hashem! No problem. At the next opportunity, the rebbi filled in the boys at length.

At the time, I was giving a training course for *mechanchim* at the Toronto Cheder, and I relayed the story to them. Three *rebbeim* confidently assured the *menahel* that surely the students know. The *menahel* took them into a first-grade classroom and asked the boys who wrote the Chumash. Not one knew.

I was also giving a seminar for Bais Yaakov elementary school teachers and principals. Once again, I repeated the story. The principal of a school in Queens decided to try it out. She went into a first-grade classroom and asked the girls who wrote the Chumash. Jackpot! She got three answers: Eliyahu Hanavi, Shlomo Hamelech, and Rav Zelig Epstein, who founded a yeshiva in the area.

A cute story, but the lesson is profound. What we do not teach children in one way or another, they simply will not know. It may seem simple to us, but if we do not tell it to them, we cannot rely on them absorbing it by osmosis.

This does not apply just to the basics of *emunah*, but to everything in life. If we neglect the subject of honesty in business, they will not know how great an emphasis the Torah places on *yashrus*, or internalize the *emunah* that every penny comes from Hashem. If we don’t tell them about the glorious history of our people, the martyrdom of hundreds of thousands who refused to give up their faith, they will not absorb the pride and passion for Torah and *mitzvos*. If we don’t share the thirteen *ikarei emunah*, they will not know what they are.

It is true that schools are already overloaded. All of this, and so much more, would have to be slipped into the curriculum a little bit at a time. Those who are able might decide to take advantage of the Shabbos table to learn these topics with their children. They will only know what we make the effort to teach them. 

person who would not be betrayed by his imperfections and who would not require atonement? Therefore, *zeh yitnu*—when we count, it is not with what we have actually done for the common good, but with the symbolic expression of what we know is our duty.

There is no greater joy than to be among *pekudei Hashem*, those who are counted by G-d; to be remembered before Him—even for a fleeting moment, even if one lives in the most humble of conditions. Only one who resolves to do his duty will pass from the nondescript crowd of self-seekers into the noble circle of those counted before G-d.

The contribution required of each individual is symbolized by one half-shekel. Objectively, one individual’s efforts, no matter how perfect, cannot accomplish everything. To produce the whole, there must be an equally devoted investment on the part of his brother. No individual is asked to accomplish the entire task: *lo alecha hamelacha ligmor* (Pirkei Avos 2:16); he is simply asked to do his part.

One shekel is equal to 20 *gerah*. The individual is expected to contribute ten. No matter how small a fraction it is, he must spare no effort and no resource in promoting the accomplishment of the whole and furthering the welfare of the community. Although *lo alecha hamelacha ligmor*, nevertheless, *v’lo atah ben chorin lehibatel mimena*. 

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



wonder WORLD

CAST OFF



How does the body heal after a broken bone?

In Parshas Mishpatim, the Torah lists the *halachos* that apply when one person hurts another. If a bone is broken or someone is injured, there are rules about paying for damages and healing. But how does a broken bone heal? Bones may seem hard and lifeless, but they are living tissue, filled with blood vessels and cells. When a bone breaks, the body immediately starts to repair it. First, blood clots form around the break. Then, special cells build a soft “bridge” of tissue called a callus. Over time, that callus becomes hard bone again. Most bones heal in about 6 to 12 weeks, depending on the person’s age and the kind of break. Doctors may use casts to keep the bone in place while it heals, but it’s really the body doing the work—Hashem designed it that way! 

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