

# Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS

## CLEAN SLATE


Mrs. Batsheva Perlstein (name changed) was a regular customer at a dry cleaning establishment located just outside the Jewish community of Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

Once, when Mrs. Perlstein came to pick up quite a number of garments before Pesach, she realized that she did not have sufficient funds in her bank account to cover the payment.

“I’m sorry, Mike,” she told the proprietor, “but I don’t have the full amount right now. You’ll have to hold onto some of the clothing until I do.”

“No, it’s all right; you can take it all,” Mike replied graciously.

Mrs. Perlstein later repaid his kindness with a piece of advice to help boost his business: She suggested that he place an advertisement in a local Jewish publication. Mike accepted her suggestion, and before long found himself serving a large Jewish clientele.

To this day, when Mrs. Perlstein brings him her clothes, he returns the garment with the words “0 dollars — good deed” written on the receipt. He has also come to donate generously to various causes in the Jewish community. 

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gem

OF THE WEEK

## DEFENDING MOSHE'S CREDENTIALS

*By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow*

Shelach is the *parsha* of rebellion against Hashem; Korach is the *parsha* of rebellion against Moshe.


The premise of the revolt was false. *Kol ha'eida kulam* are not *kedoshim* already; rather, *kedoshim tihyu*, their calling is to be holy. Their task is to uplift themselves, not confuse their destiny with reality. Holiness should be their aspiration. To help *bnei Yisrael* realize this, the Mishkan was built in their midst. They were divided into Kohen, Levi, and Yisrael, with the Mishkan fenced off in the center, expressing the message: yes, *kedoshim tihyu*, but not yet “*kedoshim Atem*”! Not everyone was worthy of unrestricted access to the Mishkan. Even Aharon was only allowed to approach at Hashem’s command, and even then only as a messenger of the public.

A true messenger of Hashem, like Moshe and Aharon, would be the first to admit unworthiness and beg Hashem to choose someone else. But if, despite his protests, Hashem sends him and no other, who would dare to come before the messenger and ask “*Madua tisnasu al kehal Hashem?*”

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powerful  
PRAYER 

BARUCH SHEM:  
THE ANGELS' SONG

The words of *Baruch shem kevod malchuso* do not appear in the Torah, but Chazal tell us that they were said by Yaakov Avinu just before his *petirah*. When his sons gathered around him, he was concerned that perhaps one of them was not complete in *emunah*. They responded with Shema Yisrael—“Listen, Yisrael [our father]: Hashem is One in our hearts just as He is in yours.” Yaakov responded “*Baruch shem kevod malchuso l’olam va’ed*. This phrase is also in the *shira* of the *malachim*. All year long, we say it silently, since it is not written in the Torah. However, on Yom Kippur we say it aloud, just like the *malachim*. 

*Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom*



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## GROWING IN EMUNAH

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

What is expected of us when we see open miracles? Let's learn from our ancestors.

When Moshe Rabbeinu first came to the people, the Torah states, "The nation believed, and they understood that Hashem had remembered His people and seen their affliction." Durning the year following Moshe's arrival, all the ten Makkos took place, until Klal Yisrael left Egypt on the morning after Makkas Bechoros. The Egyptians pursued them into the Red Sea and were drowned. When the Yam Suf spat out their bodies, the Torah says, "Yisrael saw...and they believed in Hashem, and in Moshe His servant." But didn't they already believe, over a year earlier, when Moshe first came? Why does the Torah sum up the story of the Yam Suf by telling us that now they had *emunah*?

This classic question has various answers, but here is an important one: there is no limit to the depth of *emunah* that one can have. Yes, the Jews were indeed *maaminim* a year earlier, but there was no comparison to the height of their *emunah* after the Yam Suf. The *vayaamin* of last year could in no way compare to the *vayaaminu* of this year.

In these weeks since war has broken out, we have been witness to phenomena that can be defined as nothing other than miracles from Hashem. Besides a deep sense of gratitude to Hashem for His kindness, and an inspiration to improve our deeds, we need to increase our level of *emunah*. Upon hearing good news, we cannot move on, returning to everyday life as normal. We must remind ourselves again and again that there is a Ribono shel Olam Who is running the world.

It is said that when Rav Shlomo Wolbe came to visit the holy *mashgiach*, Rav Chatzkel, the *mashgiach* grabbed his sleeve and asked him if he "knows that there is a Borei Olam! Go back and tell your *talmidim* that there is a Borei Olam." Of course they already knew that. But the *mashgiach* wanted them to contemplate it, to the point that the clarity of their conviction would be all the greater.

This is what we should be doing now. Look upward towards Heaven, realizing that in every step of the way, the Ribono shel Olam is demonstrating His hashgacha toward us. Live with the constant awareness of His presence, *shivisi Hashem l'negdi tamid*.

Korach accused Moshe and Aharon of the greatest sin against Hashem: abusing His name for their own purposes. This hurt Moshe deeply. Hashem's emissary must be faultless in *middos*; G-d does not send those with even a hint of cruelty. Purity of character is His first credential. Had Moshe blemished his with the slightest show of self-interest—riding another man's donkey—they would have the right to deny the Source of his mission.

The reliability of a messenger must be confirmed by the one who sent him; so, too, Moshe's mission was confirmed by Hashem. Moshe did not defend himself against Korach's accusations. If G-d would not confirm the truth, his mission would come to an end.

All so-called natural events occur only by Hashem's will. However, a "natural" death would demonstrate Hashem's providence, but would not certify that Moshe's mission had come from Him. That mission was based on Hashem's intervention in the natural order.

Through Moshe's mission, Hashem wished to educate mankind, to bring man back to G-d to attain moral freedom. Through Moshe's mission, as well as every *nevuah*, Hashem demonstrates His Personality operating in freedom. Hence, a certification of this mission can only be through a *mofes*, which attests to this freedom from the laws of nature.

When Korach's death was brought about by a new creation that proclaimed Hashem as G-d, the One with the power to introduce at any time a new future not dependent on the past, then they understood that people who deny that Hashem had sent Moshe deny the rule of Hashem, and everything else he has done.

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



## wonder WORLD

### EARLY BIRD



### Why do some plants bloom before others?

In Parshas Korach, Hashem proves Aharon's leadership by making his staff blossom with almonds overnight. The *mefarshim* note that the almond tree is the first to bloom in Eretz Yisrael. But why do some plants flower quicker than others? Hashem has given each plant a system to measure light, temperature, and moisture, helping it decide when to grow. Plants like almonds bloom early so they can take advantage of the rain and ripen before summer heat dries out the soil. When it starts to warm up, cells in the buds divide, and plant hormones trigger them to break open and form flowers. Almonds are especially quick to respond, sometimes even while other trees are still dormant. But early blooming also has risk. If a late frost arrives, fragile flowers can be damaged.

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