

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
MAAMIN
Foundation

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life

LESSONS


THE VALUE OF INCLUSION

Adapted from Touched by a Story by Rabbi Spero, with the permission of the copyright holders, Artscroll/Mesorah Publications, Ltd. (Artscroll)

Rabbi Shloimy Neuberger taught eighth grade at Arie Crown Hebrew Day School in Chicago. The class was learning the story of Elisha and the axehead. When Elisha's *beis midrash* was too full, some students decided to expand the building. One young man was chopping down trees when his axehead fell into the river. He ran to tell Elisha; it was a borrowed axe and he had no money to replace it. "Show me where it sank," Elisha said. He threw a piece of wood at the spot, and the axehead rose to the surface of the water.

The school principal, Rabbi Samber, was observing the lesson and asked the class a question. Elisha had been given double the allotment of miracles that had been given to his rebbi, Eliyahu Hanavi, for a total of 16 (Yalkut Shimoni: Parashas Vayeira 92). "Why," Rabbi Samber asked, "would Elisha have 'wasted' a miracle for a boy who broke his axe? Why didn't Elisha just buy him a new one? Why was it so important for him to have the axe right now?"

A number of boys offered answers. Then one boy, Yehoshua Spak, spoke up. "Don't you think it is worthwhile for Elisha to perform a miracle to prevent a boy from feeling left out? What would the boy have done without the axehead? He would have had to sit on the side. Elisha used up one of his miracles to show us the value of including every boy."

When working on a worthy project, it is easy to overlook the details. We may write off an axehead as collateral damage. But Elisha teaches us the opposite. Every child is precious, every *talmid* must be included, and everyone must play a part. 



gem

OF THE WEEK

UNCEASING DEVOTION

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

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

This *parsha* contains the instructions for the building and dedication of the Mishkan, and for the induction of Aharon and his sons into the priesthood. However, these instructions alone cannot actualize the promised goal of Hashem's Presence dwelling in the midst of the people, as it says: "*V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'socham.*" This goal can be attained only by the people's self-dedication to the ideals of the Jewish calling embodied in the Mishkan, self-dedication that is expressed through the *tamid* service of the *kohanim*. Only such dedication will transform the *mikdash* into the dwelling place of the Shechina.

The establishment of the Temple does not achieve this purpose once and for all, but only makes it possible. The purpose is attained only if it becomes vital and dynamic through the people's constant acts of self-dedication, through the life rhythm of the nation, as it were.

This is the meaning of the *tamid* offering: the people's unceasing devotion

continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER 

SHEMONE ESREI:
OUR POWER AND INFLUENCE

The first three *brachos* of Shemone Esrei describe the attributes of G-d Himself: *gadol*, *gibor*, and *norah*, as revealed to Moshe. The last three focus on the relationship of the receiver to the giver. They parallel the first three, answering the questions "Who are we? What is our power? What influences us?"

The answers are: "We are G-d's servants (*Avodah*); we are powerless and depend on Him, and are filled with gratitude (*Modim*); we are subject to Divine rule, and only the heavenly harmony maintains our existence amid conflict (*Sim Shalom*)."

Adapted from The World of Prayer by Rabbi Elie Munk (Feldheim)

**From our
readers...**

We love the material.
Yasher Koach!

- Yaacov S.

THE UNDERTAKING OF TOSAFOS

by Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

Rashi left over a tremendous heritage through his sons-in-law, his grandchildren, and his *talmidim*. They were responsible for the formation of an entire network of *yeshivos* throughout France, Germany, and even England. These great men are known to us by the title Baalei Tosafos, the authors of the Tosafos commentary, which is now printed on the outside margins around the text of every Gemara.

The Tosafos, although based on analysis of Rashi, served a very different purpose than Rashi. The Gemara has no punctuation marks, and it is not always obvious where a question ends and an answer begins. The Gemara will often refer to a concept that is discussed elsewhere in the Talmud, without elaborating on the context. Since the Talmud was written in the Aramaic that was spoken in Bavel at the time, there are countless references to ancient vessels, foods, and medicines that need to be defined. Rashi guides us through the Gemara step by step, making it readable even to the non-scholar. If there is an obvious difficulty, Rashi assures us that the Gemara will soon address it.

The Tosafos serves a totally different function. The Torah, both written and Oral, is consistent throughout, with no intrinsic contradictions between rulings. Even the principles underlying the laws must be consistent throughout. However, sometimes there may appear to be a contradiction. Enter the Baalei Tosafos to resolve the problem, showing how the cases are not identical, and hence subject to different rulings.

Tosafos almost always begins by quoting Rashi's commentary and trying to resolve any contradiction to his approach from anywhere else in the vast text of the Shas. If Tosafos can not satisfy the problem following Rashi's pshat, they will offer an alternative explanation that circumvents the difficulty.

In the time of the Rishonim, all *sefarim*, including the Gemara, were copied by hand. Professional copiers were hired to painstakingly copy one text to another, word for word. If the copier was unlearned or careless, he could easily produce a version full of mistakes. And if other copiers relied on his version, there would be two versions of the same passage in circulation. Rashi often tells us "the following is the correct text, but such-and-such is the incorrect text." Sometimes Tosafos finds places which seem to contradict Rashi's preferred text and actually finds the other text more acceptable. Such situations are often the basis of a halachic *machlokes* between Rashi and Tosafos. 🕯

To be continued...

to the ideals of the Torah, ideals for which the Mishkan was erected. That is why the command of the *tamid* offering immediately follows the *shivas yemei hamilu'im*, in direct connection with them.

Klal Yisrael were to offer up *kevasim bnei shana*, a symbol of the nation. At the hour of their birth as a nation, they stood before Hashem as the "sheep of His flock." They attained national existence only by entrusting their destiny to their Shepherd.

What they vowed to do at the solemn hour of their birth they shall carry out as long as they exist. Klal Yisrael must never think it has outgrown the Shepherd's guidance. It remains forever in its youth, like the yearling sheep.

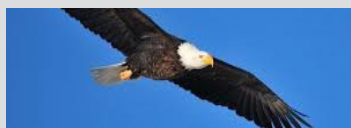
It is crucial to note the contrast between the "lamb" of Jewish symbolism and the "lamb" of another, non-Jewish view. In the non-Jewish view, the lamb is a symbol of passive suffering, in which a person considers his own martyrdom as the ideal of his life's mission. By contrast, in Jewish thought, the lamb symbolizes the eternal freshness of youth, with which a person entrusts himself to the guidance of his Shepherd and through that finds the essence of his life, an essence forever joyful.

At the hour of its historical birth, the nation's task was to surrender itself to Hashem's guidance – primarily with respect to its fate, which is in G-d's hands. After that, however, its task was to fulfill its destiny, not just by passively accepting its fate, but by actively endeavoring to carry out its assigned mission in its way of life under G-d's guidance. 🕯



wonder WORLD

FEARLESS FIGHTERS



What do golden eagles eat?

Golden eagles prey mostly on small to medium-sized mammals, including jackrabbits, squirrels, and prairie dogs. However, golden eagles are very aggressive. They will hunt larger animals, too, such as seals, mountain goats, foxes, badgers, and bobcats.

They are also very cunning. If they are in the mood of a "free" meal, they will follow crows or other scavengers and then take their food. They are also quite fearless, and will attack and fight off large beasts, such as bears and coyotes, if these animals try to prey on their young. 🕯

Adapted from *Exploring the Wild World of Animals & Birds* (Israel Bookshop Publications)