

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
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life

LESSONS

NOT OUR HOPE

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

Rav Yankel Galinsky's wife and child died at the hands of the Nazis; only he made it out of Europe alive. He was ready to give up on everything, he had no interest in starting a new family. He went to pour out his heart to the Chazon Ish, and the Chazon Ish changed his perspective with one story.

There was once a businessman who would travel to the Leipzig fair every year to make deals that would support his family for the year. One year, he got sick right before the fair and asked his wife to take his place. She was overwhelmed, but they had no choice. When she got there, she had no idea what to do. As she made her way to the inn at the end of the first day, she discovered that her purse was missing.

Suddenly she noticed a man holding a wad of money. She ran over and asked if he had just found it. He had—but he was going to keep it. “You gave up,” he said, referring to the *halacha* in Bava Metzia 21. “So it’s mine.”

She convinced him to go with her to a *rav*. They presented their cases. “What did you say?” the *rav* asked.

“I said that I lost all of my husband’s money.”

“But she gave up hope!” the *finder* said.

The *rav* looked at them. “It was not her money to give up hope! It doesn’t belong to her!”

The Chazon Ish looked Rav Yankel in the eye. “The Ribbono Shel Olam placed you here for a purpose. You want to give up hope, but it is not yours to give up.”



gem

OF THE WEEK

AN UNBLEMISHED OFFERING

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

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

The *navi* Malachi condemns the Jews who offer blind, lame, and sick animals as *korbanos*, calling it a desecration of Hashem’s *mizbei’ach*. He rebukes the *kohanim* for causing this desecration through their teachings, for in their eyes, the Beis Hamikdash was not a place for the best and freshest, all the strength and vitality that a man has to offer. Klal Yisrael had degraded it to a hospital, a home for the crippled, established solely for those whose lives have been shipwrecked. They saw it as a shelter for life’s castoffs, for people who could find no other place. Only the dregs, people not needed anywhere else, were brought to the House of Hashem. “Try presenting this to your human governor,” Malachi cries angrily, “and see whether he will be pleased with you or receive you graciously!”

This is the same rebuke hurled by Hoshea at the priests of Malchei Yisrael: *ki avel alav amo, uchmarav alav yagilu*: when the people mourn, their priests are delighted (Hoshea 10:5). The priests, with their sanctuaries, await the

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powerful
PRAYER

HASHIVEINU:
RETURNING TO THE TORAH



Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah. Paraphrased, this means: return us to the awareness that it is Your Torah that we are learning.

The lack of awareness of the true meaning of learning Torah and observing *mitzvos* is so common that the Chachamim instituted this bracha as a *tefillah* to ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu to help us stay focused on the true meaning of our *talmud Torah* and *avodas Hashem*.

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

**From our
readers...**

Your newsletters are really good.

- Avigdor P.

A JUMP BACK IN TIME

by Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

In honor of the approaching Yom Tov, we will take a step back in history to the time of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. As soon as Moshe Rabbeinu arrived on the scene and the Ten Plagues began, the Jewish people were no longer enslaved. The Egyptians were struck again and again, to the point that the nation was in ruins. Although Mitzrayim had previously been the major world power, after these events, for the next 500 years the Tanach records no significant interactions between Egypt and its neighbors. As the Jews conquered Eretz Canaan, the Egyptians did not try to intervene (Rav Avigdor Miller, *zt"l*).

Hashem could easily have wiped out Mitzrayim in a single plague and rescued His people. But the Torah tells us that there was a purpose in bringing so many diverse *makkos*: “You shall tell your child and your grandchild how I made a mockery of Mitzrayim and My signs that I placed among them, and you will know that I am Hashem.” The *makkos* were a singular demonstration of the might of Hashem, Who controls everything in the universe from water to animals, weather and human life. We tell about the *makkos* not only out of gratitude, but to tell our children about Hashem’s greatness.

It is specifically these lessons that we need to remember and transmit. The Ramban tells us that since the *makkos* were a one-time event, they will not be repeated for any *rasha* who demands to see proof. This is why we have so many *mitzvos zecher l’yetzias Mitzrayim*: so that we will never forget.

In the last decades of R’ Yisroel Salanter’s life, he traveled around Germany and France trying to undo some of the harm wrought by the Reform movement. In one home, he realized that the host was no longer careful in mitzvah observance. The man told him that a Reform Jew had said that Hashem does not punish one who sins. “He ate a ham sandwich in front of me, and nothing happened,” the host said. “Since then my faith has been weakened.”

At this point, the host’s daughter came home from the conservatory where she studied music, holding a certificate stating that she played piano with excellence. R’ Yisroel asked if she would play for him; he wanted to see if she really could play with such prowess.

“No,” the girl said. “I don’t have to give a demonstration to every person who doesn’t want to believe my certificate.”

R’ Yisroel turned to his host. “Your daughter is right. The Torah and our mesorah are a certificate. Hashem is not going to make a personalized demonstration for anyone who says they don’t believe.”

To be continued...

misfortune and grief of their “believers.” It is not the joyous and happy people who go on pilgrimages to their houses of worship, but the blind, the lame, the sick and the weak. Religion, to them, was a consolation for the suffering and the disadvantaged. It held no sway in lives that were vibrant and effervescent with the joy of action.

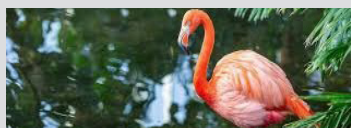
Not so is the *mizbei’ach Hashem*, through which *klal Yisrael* calls in the name of the G-d of the world. The Beis Hamikdash demands the whole of a person’s life—unlimited and total commitment. In return, it grants life that is worthy of being called “life,” life in which even death and pain lose their force.

Therefore, just as *kohanim* must not have any *mum* if they are to approach and serve at the altar, so too—and to a greater extent—must the *korbanos* themselves be whole, without blemish. By offering them, man draws close to the Shechina. An offering embodies the nature of our relationship with Hashem; “wholeness” is a primary condition of this relationship. Being whole with G-d entails no less than the absolute surrender of one’s entire being. It is the essence of *bechol levavcha ub’chol nafshecha ub’chol meodecha* (Devarim 6:5). It is a duty that follows directly from the very first demand made of us: *veheyisem li segulah* (Shemos 19:5). This command lays the foundation stone for our entire mission: our relationship to God must be all-encompassing, without reserve or limit.



wonder WORLD

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT



How do flamingos get their color?

Flamingos are tall, elegant, beautifully colored birds that live and feed in shallow waters. While there are six different species of flamingos, the general anatomy of them all is basically the same: long legs, long neck, curved bill, webbed feet, yellow eyes, and of course, colorful plumage.

Flamingos get their famous pink or orange color from the food they eat. If a flamingo is in a zoo, the zookeepers must make sure to give it food that contains plenty of carotene, or it will lose its color. We, too, must be careful with what we put in our bodies, because it makes us what we are!

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