Pulse OF Emunah

ANI MAAMIN Foundation

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life LESSONS

THE FINAL DESTINATION

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A few years ago, the Katz family took a trip to Eretz Yisrael. Their flight home to New York included a stopover in Rome.

Due to an airport strike in Eretz Yisrael, the Israel-to-Rome flight landed late, one and a half hours after the Rome-to-New York flight had been scheduled to leave.

Upon their arrival in Rome, their best hope would be to *daven* that the flight to New York had been delayed, and rush like madmen to make the connection.

But rushing in a frenzied manner would make a *chillul* Hashem. So, when the flight touched down in Rome, the Orange children did not stampede off the plane and make a frantic dash for their next gate.

Instead, they cleaned up their seats of all the garbage they had produced on the flight.

Their parents instructed them not to push or shove while disembarking, even if it meant that the family would miss their flight home.

The Katz children understood that where we go is less important than how we behave while traveling there.

They were going to America, but ultimately, the final destination is Hashem, Whom we will all meet in *din hashmayim*, and Who we answer to with all our actions.

The only real souvenirs which we take with us are not our trips, but our behavior along the way

gem OF THE WEEK

CAMOUFLAGE OF INTENTIONS

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

As Avraham Avinu moved his encampment eastward, then southward, away from Shechem, there was a famine. He went down to Mitzrayim due to the severity of the famine, looking to build for himself and his household a firm foundation, away from cities and towns. The reason for this is that he felt he needed isolation.

For Avraham, the mountainside, was the place that Hashem revealed Himself, the region where man could find G-d. The field was Yitzchak's place of Divine revelation. Yaakov didn't need to leave his home in order to find Hashem; he found him in the place where G-d always wants to find Him: he was the father of children.

Avraham was a lone and solitary figure, singular among men; he could not find Hashem in the sphere of human society. To seek Hashem and to uncover the traces of His deeds, he went out to the wilds of nature in the mountains, where the traces of men's doings had not yet reached. With the words in pasuk 12:10 "*vayhe ra'av baretz*", we come to a story that at first glance seems more than a little strange.

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powerful PRAYER

MODIM ANACHNU LACH: WONDERS EVERY DAY

If we paid better attention, we would see endless marvels everywhere. Hakadosh Baruch Hu could have made a black-and-white world. Instead, we have blue skies, green grass, and flowers of every color. Food could have grown in the form of tasteless nuggets.

Instead, we have fruits of every flavor and color, vegetables, meat, fish and eggs. These are just some of the amazing wonders we need to thank Hashem for every day when we say Modim

Adapted from Biur Tefillah (Ani Maamin Foundation)

Coming in November! 3 Part Webinar with Rabbi Sapirman! Teaching Emunah

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inspiring A GENERATION

HASHEM'S MASTER PLAN

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

There is a famous *mashal* related by Rav Elchanan Wasserman H"yd about a city dweller who met a farmer. He had never been to a farm and wished to come and observe what went on there. "You are welcome to visit," said the farmer, "but you should not ask any questions, because you won't understand." The city dweller agreed, and came for an extended stay. It was the beginning of the plowing season, and the farmer began making furrows in his grassy field. His guest was aghast. "How could you ruin a beautiful field!" "I told you not to ask," the farmer retorted.

The farmer then threw perfectly good wheat kernels on the floor and covered them over with dirt. At every stage—harvesting, threshing, grinding and finally mixing the flour with water to make a white mud—the city dweller could not comprehend how someone could be so foolish. It wasn't until the bread came out of the oven that he finally understood.

We, too, cannot understand the individual steps in the process unless we know the Master Plan. Hashem's decisions are often beyond human comprehension. We simply do not know His plan. The *perek* of Tehillim beginning "*Mizmor shir l'yom hashabbos*" does not mention Shabbos again after that first *pasuk*. Radak explains that this *perek* consists of the thoughts that we should dwell upon during ShabboS. All week, we are busy with our obligations, too distracted to contemplate the meaning of our lives. But when Shabbos comes, we have time to think. This particular *perek* deals with two ideas. David *Hamelech* says that he rejoices in the beauty of Creation and the eventual justice: the righteous will get they have earned, while the wicked will be punished for the evil they have committed.

The wonders of Creation are obviously an appropriate theme for Shabbos, but what does reward and punishment have to do with Shabbos? The answer is simple. When we begin to recognize Hashem's infinite wisdom in the Creation of the universe and all it contains, we can come to understand that just as He knows how to make the world, He also knows how to run it. There is justice. All will receive what their actions have earned.

We must never let ourselves become overwhelmed with questions about how Hashem runs the world. His wisdom is infinite, and we trust that all He does is in accordance with His plan. All the mysterious individual processes that we observe are leading up to the ultimate fulfillment. Just as He knows how to make a world, He knows what to do in running it

gem OF THE WEEK

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Avraham left the land that had been promised to him; he did not rely on G-d, Who knows how to provide even in a wilderness; and it appears he compromised the moral welfare of his wife in order to save himself!

The Ramban concludes "Avraham committed a grave sin by placing his virtuous wife before a stumbling block of iniquity because of his fear of being killed.....". This shouldn't perplex us because the Torah does not seek to portray our great men as perfectly ideal figures; it defies no man.

Hashem presents Himself as the model, saying: "Emulate Me! Walk in My ways!" We are never to say: "This must be good and right, because so-and-so did it." The Torah relates events not because they are necessarily worthy of emulation, but because they took place.

The Torah does not hide from us the faults, errors, and weaknesses of our great men, and this is precisely what gives its stories credibility. Had our great men been portrayed free of passions and inner conflicts, their virtues would have seemed to us as merely the consequence of their loftier nature, not acquired by personal merit, and certainly no model we could ever hope to emulate.

We must never attempt to whitewash the spiritual and moral heroes of our past. They do not need our apologetics, nor would they tolerate such attempts on our part.

Emes, the truth, is the seal of our Torah, and truthfulness is the guiding principle of the Torah's great teachers and commentators. But before we pass judgment on Avraham, let us examine more closely the incident of pretending to be Sarah's brother. Did he fear only for his own life? Did he compromise his wife's honour?

The climate of Mitzrayim was that an unmarried women was safer than a married woman, especially a foreign woman.

For Sarah's sake, Avraham decided to pass herself off as an unmarried woman, therefore giving her a chance that she could be saved

wonder WORLD

SNEAKY CATERPILLAR



What could be the forest's sneakiest caterpillar?

Spicebush caterpillars are masters of camouflage, excel at hiding, and are experts at appearing to be something they're not. During the day, while they sleep, they use their silk to fold a leaf around themselves to hide inside. When they are tiny, they resemble fresh, wet bird droppings, and what predator would want to eat that?

As they grow, their coloring changes until they look like small green garden snakes; they even flip out a fake, forked snake tongue that emits a disgusting smell. When they are about to pupate, they change color again to blend in with the dead leaves on the forest floor as they search for a plant to form their chrysalis on. From its tiny beginnings to its final transformation, this clever little insect truly proves that appearances can be incredibly deceiving.