

# Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS

## DISCIPLINE AND DIGNITY

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One of the most impressive qualities of our community is its culture of self-discipline, born of the Jewish people's innate *yiras shamayim* and ability to overcome base desires. This was the polar opposite of Amalek, a nation that the Torah describes as "*lo yarei Elokim*."

The philosophy of Amalek rejects the concept of self-control; Amalek shuns the idea of living a disciplined lifestyle and resisting the baser drives and impulses of a human being. For *klal Yisrael*, though, such a lifestyle is the ultimate ideal.

Recently, a non-Jewish teacher in the general studies department of the Cincinnati Hebrew Day School approached me to say that her experience teaching sixth-grade boys in a *frum* day school had led her to make a decision about schooling for her own son, due to enter the sixth grade this coming year.

"Rabbi," she said, "after seeing how the boys behave in this school, I have decided to enroll my own son in an all-boys school for this coming year, even though it is a Catholic school and I am not Catholic. 'You see,' she explained, 'you have no idea how much healthier and cleaner your Jewish boys are, because they are cut off from all the drama and immorality of the outside world.'

You really should appreciate your lifestyle, with its separation of the genders and all the other things that come along with it. 'I have learned from your school that when a boy is raised in a cocoon during his teenage years, he can come out of it as beautiful as a butterfly.'"



gem

OF THE WEEK

## CONSTANT REMINDER

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

Sefer Devarim is commonly referred to as Mishneh Torah ("repetition of the Torah"), however the majority of the *mitzvos* in Devarim are recorded here for the first time. We must explain why they are written only here, and why, of all the *mitzvos* reiterated orally by Moshe Rabbeinu, at this point, that these were chosen to be included.

In chapter 16, verses 1-17, Moshe Rabbeinu only includes Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot which focus on a specific time of year and their celebration is concentrated on one central point designated by Hashem. He left out Shabbos, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Shemini Atzeres, which derive their meaning from our personal relationship with Hashem and were able to be fully observed in the *midbar*. Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot are significant in their association with the soil and its seasonal cycle, and they become relevant only after conquest of the land.

Therefore, in the weeks before the entry into the land, Moshe Rabbeinu reviewed the entire Torah and expounded on all its commandments, but the Torah only recorded the ones that were affected by the conquest of the land. This context explains the choice of the *mitzvos*. The repeated warnings against *avodah zarah* and the associated *aveiros* are needed because immediately upon entering the land, the people will be exposed to the religions of Canaan. *Continued on reverse*

powerful  
PRAYER



V'LAMALSHINIM:  
UNMASKING HERESY

The earliest Christians were not honest about their beliefs. They pretended to be believing Jews, davening with the community and keeping other *mitzvos*, but maintained false beliefs and tried to convince others of them as well. For this reason, it was necessary to reveal who were the believing Jews and who were the secret apostates. This *bracha* was designed to help—after all, no sect would agree to pray for its own destruction! From the time this *bracha* was introduced, Christians refused to lead *chazaras hashatz*, making it easier for true Jews to separate from them.

Adapted from Biur Tefillah (Ani Maamin Foundation)

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## TWO CENTURIES IN ADVANCE

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

This Shabbos, the Haftara is the first chapter in Sefer Yeshaya. This far-off vision of the eventual *churban* was said approximately two hundred years in advance. The *navi* vividly describes Hashem's extreme displeasure with the various *mitzvos* that the people were observing. The *navi* says in His name that Hashem has no pleasure whatsoever from their many *korbanos*, their attendance in the Bais Hamikdash on the three festivals and other occasions. Neither does He care for their observance of Shabbos and *yamim tovim* or their multitude of prayers.

To the contrary, he loathes them, because he knows that in their hearts they are leaning towards *avoda zara*, already cheating in business and corrupting the court system. This is what the Sefer Hachinuch tells us about Hashem's *mitzvos*: "Know, my son, that all that Hashem derives from people doing His *mitzvos* is that He wants to do good for us. When a person is prepared and ready, through doing the *mitzvos*, to receive the good, then Hashem will grant him that good.

Therefore, He informed them of the good path, which is the way of the Torah, so that they can become good people. .... A special *parsha* has been written in the Torah to inform us of this fundamental idea. That is what is written, 'Now, Yisroel, what does Hashem want from you, etc. only for your good.' This means that Hashem asks nothing of you in your doing His *mitzvos* other than that he wants, in His great goodness, to do good to you.

As is written after this, 'Behold! Hashem, your G-d owns the heavens and the heavens above the heavens, the earth and all that is in it. Only in your forefathers did Hashem delight to love them. He chose their descendants after them, (that is you), like this very day.' This means that He does not need your *mitzvos*, but only out of His love for you to give you merit." Hashem needs nothing, and whatever we do, seemingly for Him, is not for His benefit at all, but in some way exclusively for ours.

As the Chinuch concludes, since it is His will that we keep His commandments in order to receive the infinite reward that He wants to give us, it follows that when we frustrate His desire we are deserving of punishment. Obviously, if Yeshaya was given this prophecy so long in advance, the deterioration of the spiritual state of our people must have already begun. Had they listened to the *nevi'im* they could have done *teshuva* and negated all these frightening predictions.

But they stubbornly refused, ignored the warnings, and actually protested against the *nevi'im*. Unfortunately, the rest is history. May the Klal Yisroel wake up and finally do *teshuva*. Then an end will come to all the tzaros, and the glorious era of Moshiach will be ushered in. 🕯

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The laws of warfare need to be revisited because they will be applicable when we enter the land to conquer it. The laws of *shechita* and *kashrus* will be needed because we will again be responsible for our own food production and preparation, and so on.

Moshe Rabbeinu's introduction to his explanation and clarification of the entire Torah, however, is recorded here in full. These first eleven chapters convey the basic attitudes and general duties toward Hashem and His Torah, which are expected of every Yid.

Also included are *mitzvos* that accompany every Yid wherever he might be, applying them daily, and direct us constantly in faithfulness to Hashem and our duties — *birkas ha-mazon*, *mezuzah*, *tefillin*, and *Ve-haya im shamoa*, as well as *zechiras yetzias Mitzrayim*. These speeches should remain in the hearts and minds of all *Yidden*, inspiring them to be faithful children of Hashem's covenant, along with attitudes of *yiras* Hashem, *ahavas* Hashem, and *deveikus* Hashem, which are based on the theoretical and practical awareness of *achdus* Hashem.

This *mitzvah* also includes *limud* Torah, which is a *mitzvah* for every man of Israel, and *ve-shinantam le-vanecha*, which is a *mitzvah* for each father toward his child, and the *mitzvah* of *lo sosef ve-lo sigra*, which obligates all of us to keep the Torah as it was handed down to us, without changing, adding to, or subtracting from it.

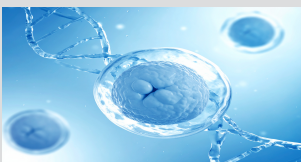
When the *Yidden* were about to make the transition from the revealed guidance of Hashem into a life of individualization, more than ever they needed to be constantly reminded of their calling. Even his clothing is to remind him of *Yiddishe* duty and the moral nobility of man. Sefer Devarim is a collection of the *mitzvos* especially needed by both the authorities and every individual.

Some of the *mitzvos* had purposely not been put into writing until this point; others, which had been mentioned already, were now repeated because it was essential for the goal. It is the oral reiteration and explanation of the entire Torah by Moshe Rabbeinu which concluded his work for Hashem's people on earth. 🕯



## wonder WORLD

### DRAMATIC SHIFT



How do cells survive foreign environments?

In the early stages of an embryo, stem cells exist in a tightly packed, uniform cluster. At this stage, they are entirely dependent on constant signaling from a central mass. Their immediate environment is identical, and they all share the exact same conditions, yet not requiring individual, specialized instructions. For the organism to mature, however, a dramatic shift must occur. These cells must migrate, disperse, and leave the safety of the center to form specialized tissues—like muscle, skin, or bone—across different regions of the body. As they disperse, they encounter vastly different environments and unique physiological demands. To survive this transition, the cells do not alter their master DNA blueprint. Instead, specific, previously dormant genetic instructions are activated for the first time to guide them. As they differentiate into independent tissues, they use instruction tags—molecular reminders bound directly to their DNA—to prevent them from losing their unique identity or assimilating into surrounding tissue thus creating the different parts of the body with different responsibilities and functions. 🕯