

# Pulse OF Emunah

ANI  
MAAMIN  
Foundation

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life


LESSONS

## DIRECT LINE

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky was known for his unyielding commitment to honesty in all areas. When Rav Yaakov's wife was about to undergo a serious operation, he wished to receive a *bracha* for her well-being from Rav Moshe Feinstein. His numerous attempts to reach Rav Moshe, though, met with no success, as the phone line was consistently busy.

Although Rav Yaakov was privy to the number of Rav Moshe's other, private phone line, which was an unlisted number, he did not feel justified in using it. That number, he explained, had been given to him to reach Rav Moshe about matters concerning *klal Yisrael*; for a personal matter, he was not permitted to use it.

When a person has zero tolerance for even the slightest trace of *sheker*, and when he lives with *emes* as his top priority, his actions will affect his children, his *talmidim*, and everyone else in his life.

The impact of such a life—like that of Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky—can last for generations, creating ripple effects that can reach thousands or even millions of people. 

*Adapted from A Life Worth Living by Rabbi Shraga Freedman, with the permission of the publisher*



gem

OF THE WEEK

## BETWEEN COVENANTS

*By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow*

At the command of Hashem, Moshe uttered the blessings and curses of the *divrei habris*, the covenant established with the Jewish people as they stood in Moav, in sight of the Promised Land. It was a renewal of the *bris* at Har Sinai, when the Torah was given.

Between these two covenants, the Jews traveled in the wilderness and defeated Sichon and Og. These experiences completed a historical journey that began with Yetzias Mitzrayim, when they saw Hashem's hand guiding the fate of nations. Over the years, they had seen with their own eyes that G-d does not just intervene at critical moments. Rather, even in relatively normal times, He shows His *hashgacha pratis*. Now, before entering Eretz Yisrael, they must renew their *bris* on the basis of these experiences.


The covenant of Sinai, which was made on the basis of redemption from Egypt, had not been strong enough to keep that generation worthy of Eretz Yisrael. Yet there were still many people who had seen the redemption with their own eyes—all of the women, the entire *shevet Levi*, the men between 40

*continued on reverse side*

powerful  
PRAYER 

MAARIV ARAVIM:  
ALWAYS AND FOREVER

Among all mortal creations, Hashem alone lives forever—*Kel chai v'kayam*. Among everything that dies, He alone is eternal. He rules *tamid*, perpetually, and *l'olam va'ed*, for all eternity, day and night.

Some object to this concluding sentence, since it introduces a new train of thought to a *bracha* that discusses other concepts. It must be pointed out, however, that at the corresponding point in the morning *bracha*, the concluding sentence also turns toward a future salvation—*ohr chadash al Tzion ta'ir*. 

*Adapted from World of Prayer by Rabbi Elie Munk*

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## A SOBERING THOUGHT

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

In one more week, every human being will stand before the Creator in judgment for health, wealth, tranquility—"Who will live and who will die." Whatever has transpired since last year was decreed at last Rosh Hashanah. It has not been an easy year for Klal Yisrael as a whole, or for many people as individuals.

There is a verse in Sefer Yeshaya that is difficult to understand: "For [the Jewish people] have taken double [punishment] from Hashem for all their sins." How can we say that we have received double? Does Hashem not punish us less than we deserve? Rav Elchanan Wasserman explains that when Hashem wants to send a message to Klal Yisrael, He first brings a universal calamity, intending for Am Yisrael to understand that He is speaking to them. If they ignore this, it may become necessary for Hashem to bring a calamity upon the Jews specifically, so that we will realize that He wants us to do *teshuvah*.

Not long ago, we suffered through a devastating plague in which millions died, schools closed, businesses collapsed, vulnerable people were isolated from their loved ones, and despair blanketed the world. I humbly speculate that if our *emunah* was as it should be, we would have understood the lesson aimed at us no less clearly than if we had received a letter postmarked "*shamayim*." But now that the severity of the pandemic has passed, life seems to have gone back to the way it was before—the same weaknesses, the same pursuits. It is not my place to specify where we as a nation should improve, but suffice it to say that, if anything, pursuit of *gashmiyus* should have decreased and pursuit of *ruchniyus* increased. Forgive me if I err; I am not sure that this has happened.

And I speculate once more, based on another thought from Rav Elchanan, who explains the statement of the Vilna Gaon that this world is merely a facsimile of the heavenly world. When we see plastic fruits in the display window of a fruit store, we understand that they are pictures of the wares inside. If we see an increase in hatred for the Jewish people below, it is a sign of a heavenly accusation against us in the court above. If the pandemic did not achieve the desired results, then perhaps Hashem is sending us a more direct message.

As the world turns against us, demonizing our community in ways unheard of since the end of World War II and seeking to undermine our *chinuch*, it would certainly be appropriate to reflect on how we can achieve greater favor in the eyes of our Creator.

Wishing all a *kesiva v'chasima tova* and a year of *gezeiros tovos*. 🕯

and 60 years old. Moshe was entirely justified in beginning with "*atem re'isem*"—you yourselves have seen. Before your eyes, Hashem performed all these deeds. The miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim should have given you knowledge of G-d, of His power, His rule and His justice. You should have looked upon the world with different eyes; you should have heeded His teachings. You should have already been fit to be G-d's people in G-d's land.

But the miracles of Egypt were not enough to give them *lev ladaas v'einayim liros v'oznayim lishmoa*. They needed the *midbar*. They required 40 years of miracles in the wilderness, *l'maan teidu ki ani Hashem Elokeichem*.

"*Ani Hashem*" is the signature with which G-d sealed His commandments. He is the sole One Who can say *ani hu*, the only true "I." With His Will He brings about every moment, as indicated by His Four-Letter Name. This is the truth entrusted to Israel and mankind with the revelation of G-d's power in Egypt.

However, it required all the trials of the wilderness for Israel to know that *Ani Hashem* is *Elokeichem*. That the one G-d, exalted above all, Who by His Will bears the universe, is *Elokeinu*: watching over us and guiding us, helping our nation and each individual.

"I led you forty years through the wilderness," Moshe says, "*l'maan teidu*, so that you might know that He Who revealed Himself to you in Egypt as *Ani Hashem*, and as *Ani Hashem* sealed His Torah, is *Elokeichem*."

This is the "knowledge of G-d" they must attain, and only with this knowledge would they be able to secure their future. 🕯

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



## wonder WORLD

### WONDERFUL WATER



#### How do the unique properties of water benefit us?

Water is vital for life, as it makes up about 60% of the human body and 71% of the Earth's surface. Water also has many unique physical and chemical properties that are necessary for us to survive on earth. It has a high specific heat which means it can absorb or release a lot of heat without changing its temperature much. This helps regulate the climate and keep us comfortable. Water has a high surface tension, which means it sticks to itself, forming droplets. This allows plants to draw water up from the soil. Water also expands when it freezes, which makes ice less dense than liquid water. This causes ice to float on water and insulate the aquatic life below. If ice sank, many lakes and oceans would freeze solid and life would be impossible. 🕯

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