

Pulse OF Emunah

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MAAMIN
Foundation

ISSUE # 427 | PARSHAS EIKEV

FRIDAY AUGUST 15TH, 2025 | 21 AV, 5785

life

LESSONS

PACKAGE DEAL

Rav Yosef Zimbal, a *rav* in West Gate, Lakewood, once shared a story of an interaction he had with Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky at a wedding.

Before the *chuppah*, Rabbi Zimbal had a lengthy conversation with the *rosh yeshivah*, yet after the *chuppah* was over, when Rav Shmuel passed him again, he greeted Rabbi Zimbal effusively as if he were seeing him for the first time. Rabbi Zimbal respectfully pointed out that they had already spoken.

“I know that, of course,” Rav Shmuel replied, “but there are many more people here now who did not see us talking earlier. I wouldn’t have wanted all of them to think that I simply walked by without greeting you.”

There is much we can learn from the example of Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky, one of the greatest Torah luminaries of our time, who excels in striking the balance between the *mitzvos* of *bein adam laMakom* and *bein adam lachaveiro*.

The only way to accomplish our ultimate goal of being *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* is to pursue both aspects of the Torah with equal zeal, recognizing that the Torah is a single, all-inclusive package deal. 

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OF THE WEEK

THE LAW OF THE LAND

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

The *pasuk* gives us a fact to keep in mind: “*limadti eschem chukim u’mishpatim...laasos kein b’kerev haaretz asher atem ba’im shama*”—You see that I (Moshe) have taught you laws and social rules in accordance with G-d’s command, so that you should observe them in the land you are about to enter.

Thus, the Jewish people were presented with a fact that is important for our calling and for the significance of these laws, which sets us and our laws apart from all other nations: we are the only nation in the world that had a code of law before it had a land to implement it in.

Furthermore, these laws are not intended as a means to build up a national existence and to achieve independence and prosperity in the land. Rather, these laws are the end—it is the independence, prosperity, and land that are the means. Every other nation became a nation through its land, and afterward created laws for it. We, in contrast, became a nation through the Torah, and we received a land for the sake of observing it.

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powerful
PRAYER 

VESHINANTAM LEVANECHA:
THE FIRST DAY SCHOOLS

Originally, every father used to teach his son Torah. During the second Beis Hamikdash, there were periods when many men were killed and their sons had no fathers to learn with them. One of the *kohanim gedolim* of the time, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Gamla, started a school system. With the authority of Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach behind him, he ensured that every city, town and village had a teacher to learn Torah with boys.

Most modern nations have a school system. Ours is over 2,000 years old. 

Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom

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AWAKENING EMOTION

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

No matter what is going on in the world, the summer marches on. Families are enjoying their cottages, *bachurim* are engrossed in *bein hazmanim* activities, Bais Yaakov girls are on vacation.

But Rosh Hashanah is a mere six weeks away—six weeks from the time that we all will stand in judgment before Hashem. The destiny of each person, community, nation, and indeed the whole world will be decided on Rosh Hashanah. Livelihood and health, tranquility and storm, life or death itself will all be decided on that day. How can we lose sight of what lies ahead?

Concerning the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, Rabbeinu Yonah writes, “When a person knows that his judgment will be brought before a king of flesh and blood, will he not tremble greatly, seek plans to be acquitted, and not let himself be distracted by his other affairs” (Shaarei Teshuvah)?

A similar question was the basis for the *mussar* movement of Rav Yisrael Salanter, as explained by his great *talmid* Rav Itzele Peterburger. The ultimate goal of *mussar* was to awaken the emotions to what the intellect already knows. Rav Yisrael Salanter suggested learning *mussar sefarim* aloud, in an emotional *niggun*. For practical reasons, he suggested that doing so in a separate *bais hamussar* that would not distract others from regular *sedarim*. The *bais hamussar* would have an atmosphere conducive to reflecting on the state of one’s service to Hashem and whether or not he is fulfilling his purpose in this world.

At the time, the Haskalah movement was making serious inroads to pull Jews away from observing and respecting the Torah. *Mussar* was only minimally successful among the *baalei batim* of the time, but the movement eventually found its home in many of the great Litvish *yeshivos*. Slobodka, Kelm, Novardok, Radin, Baranovitch, and Kletzk were among the *yeshivos* that followed the *mussar derech*. The Chofetz Chaim was a strong proponent as well. From these *yeshivos* would come many of the *gedolim* of the next generation. In America, almost all of our past *gedolim* were products of Slobodka: Rav Aharon Kotler, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, Rav Ruderman, Rav Hutner, and Rav Avigdor Miller, *zy”a*.

B’ezeras Hashem, next week we will explore how Rabbeinu Yonah’s question, and Rav Yisrael Salanter’s answer, are fundamental to us in our daily lives. 

The laws of other nations are the product of their unique character, formed by their land and by their changing needs. But our lawgiver, Moshe, the man from whose hands we received the Torah, never even saw the land. He never so much as set foot in it. The fact that his grave is in the wilderness is the Divine seal on the law that he transmitted; it testifies that these laws are eternal and unchanging, no matter where we are.

The laws of the Torah are absolute. They do not change with the ups and downs of our fortunes—rather, our fortunes and the fortunes of our land change in accordance with our faithfulness to the laws of the Torah.

Now, in Sefer Devarim, the Jewish people stood on the border of the land they are to enter, with the Torah in their arms, in order to observe it there in its entirety. And it was with the Torah in their arms that they were temporarily exiled. But again and again, we stand as a nation whose sole purpose is to live for the observance of this Torah.

So we await the moment when we will be able to once again enter the Land, which was given to us so that we may observe the Torah in its entirety. We, Yisrael, are the people of the Torah, not the people of a land, and without Torah, the land cannot be Eretz Yisrael. 

Based on the commentary of Rav Shmshon Raphael Hirsch *zt”l* on Chumash, with permission from the publisher.



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HIGH TIME



How does rain make food grow?

In Parshas Eikev, the Torah promises that if we follow the *mitzvos*, Hashem will give rain “in its proper time.” Rain is part of the water cycle. Water evaporates from oceans and lakes, forms clouds, and falls back to earth. When it rains, water soaks into the soil, dissolving minerals and nutrients that plants need, like nitrogen and potassium. Plant roots absorb this mixture of water and nutrients, which travel up the stem to the leaves. Using photosynthesis, the plant turns sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water into energy.

But timing matters! Too much rain at the wrong time can flood roots or rot crops. Too little, and plants dry out. That’s why the Torah promises not just rain, but rain in the right time. 

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