

your friend” is based on a belief in *Hashgachah Peratit* and a belief that the Almighty has given me all that I need.

When one wishes to crystallize Torah to its most basic concept, it is *Emunah*. This corresponds with what the *Talmud* states [*Makkot* 24a]: “(The prophet) Habakuk came and reduced the essence of Torah to a single principle: The righteous one lives by his faith” (*Tzadik b’Emunato yichyeh* [*Habakuk* 2:4]) That is how Hillel can make the statement “This is the entire Torah”. He did not leave out the other half of the loaf! (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Pirkei Abot

It is customary to study *Pirkei Abot* (Ethics of the Fathers) during the six weeks between Pesah and Shabuot, one chapter every Shabbat.

“Everything is foreseen.” (*Abot* 3:15)

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Instead of *Tzafui*, foreseen, it should have said “known” or “seen”.

The word *Tzafui* can mean floating. When one floats on the water, he makes an effort to keep his head upwards. The *Mishnah* is teaching that throughout his lifetime in this world, a person should imagine himself as floating in the ocean, so that to survive he must look upwards, look to Hashem and be attached to Him. (*Vedibarta Bam*)

A Brother's Success

Four *bachurim* stood in the *Rosh Yeshivah's* office wondering why he had asked to see them. To the best of their knowledge, they were good students who had not caused any trouble. Sitting in his office chair, Rav Yitzchak Feigelstock, *Rosh Hayeshivah* of the *Mesivta* of Long Beach, swayed back and forth with a concerned look on his face. After a few minutes he began, “There is a *bachur* on our yeshivah who is having some problems. He seems depressed, has no friends, and is doing poorly in his learning. What do you think we can do to help him?”

After hearing the boy's name, the four boys considered the situation. Chaim Kahan was the first to answer, “Unfortunately, I don't believe there is anything we can possibly do to help him.”

The *Rosh Yeshivah*, who is calm by nature, jumped quickly from his chair, looked Chaim squarely in the eye, and rebuked him sternly, “If your brother was having this problem, would you speak the same way?”

These sharp but profound words of the *Rosh Yeshivah* made a deep impression upon Chaim. Really, what would he do if it were his brother? Surely he would not give up so easily and say there was nothing that could be done to help him. Nothing else needed to be said. The boys brainstormed until they agreed upon a plan of action.

Over the years, those words would come back to guide R' Chaim every time a case arose where he needed to help someone: What would he do if it were his brother?

Approximately ten years ago, R' Chaim applied for the position of Rebbi in a prestigious yeshivah high school. Feeling confident that he had performed well in his interview, R' Chaim was certain that he would be accepted for this position. He was surprised to learn a few days later that someone else had been chosen to be the Rebbi. His surprise turned to amazement when he heard the name of the newly hired Rebbi. It was none other than the young man whom Rav Feigelstock had not let four boys give up on years earlier! R' Chaim had to smile. Apparently, this *bachur* had turned out just fine. R' Chaim was genuinely happy to have been instrumental in the success of this “brother”! (For Goodness' Sake)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition
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Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444
 West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764
 (732) 870-2225



SHABBAT AHAREI MOT-

KEDOSHIM ☆ οηfθσϵ-, Iv ηορ≤φ□♥τ□, □X♥↑

Haftarah: Yehezkel 20:2-20

MAY 5-6, 2017 10 IYAR 5777

Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **6:30 & 7:15 pm** Shahrarit: **4:51, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am**

Candlelighting: **7:37 pm**

Morning Shema by: **8:28 am**

Evening Shema and Omer after: **8:35 pm**

Shabbat Class: **6:05 pm**

Day 25 of the Omer

Shabbat Minhah: **7:15 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **8:36 pm (R"Y 9:08)**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Sunday Minhah: **7:00 pm**

This week's bulletin is dedicated to my wife, Michele,
 and my children, Michael and Steven - by Raymond Levy

This week's bulletin is dedicated in memory of Abraham "Al" Mizrahi
 by his children ρ∞T♣ξτ ι□X ο♦ωρ□χ♦τ, ♦v♣α↔°β ηΥκη□γ□κ

Mabrook to Meir and Adina Abadi on the birth of a baby girl. Mabrook to the grandparents Ike and Elana Abadi. Mabrook to the great-grandparents Meir and Barbara Abadi.

Weather permitting, *Bircat Halebanah* will be recited on Saturday night. If not, it may be said until Tuesday night, May 9.

A Message from Our Rabbi

(*Vayikra* 18:3) "כְּמַעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבְּתֶם-בָּהּ לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ"

“Like the practice of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled do not do.”

In this week's *perashah* we find the Jews journeying in the desert. They have not yet developed a national character, nor do they have a country. For now they are traveling from one country, Egypt, to another, Canaan. They are being warned severely against emulating the national character of either. The Jews are expected to develop a national character from the *Torah*, and then live by it in their own country, *Eress Yisrael*.

The verse above tells the Israelites not to emulate the lifestyle of Egypt or Canaan. Why is it necessary to mention Egypt? Why not just say: “Don't do such and such misdeeds”?

Rabbi Yaakov Haber explains that the answer can be found in *Rashi*. “Because Egypt was the most immoral and depraved country among the nations.” Why mention Canaan? *Rashi* again provides the answer: “Because the seven nations of Canaan were even more immoral and depraved than the Egyptians!”

But, if the Jews are supposed to be the “light unto the nations,” it seems they are starting off with quite a handicap, considering where they were coming from and where they were going. If G-d wanted them to be so great, why didn’t He supply them with a more conducive atmosphere to holiness, instead of taking them from bad to worse?

The answer to this problem lies in the very way Jewish history unfolds. We are compared to a rose among the thorns. Because of our exiles we were flung to some of the most morally depraved areas of the world. It was there that we were truly challenged to demonstrate our commitments to *Torah*. It was there we had to search deep within ourselves to find the essence as our souls, it was that exercise that made us grow.

Often, our growth takes place, not in spite of a diverse situation but because of it. Maybe that’s why, right from the start we were surrounded with challenges so that we can rise like a rose amongst the moral thorns of the society in which we live.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Get A Life!

The *pasuk* says, “You should keep My statutes and My laws, which if a man obeys, (*v’chai bahem*) he shall live through them, I am Hashem.” [Vayikra 18:5] The *Gemara* learns from this source that if a person is faced with the choice of committing a sin or being murdered (or alternatively, neglecting a *misvah* or being murdered), the *halachah* requires the person to commit the sin or neglect the *misvah*, and not die. However, there are three exceptions: *abodah zarah* [idol worship], *shefichut damim* [murder], and *giluy arayot* [illicit relations].

Barring these three exceptions, the *halachah* says that one should eat pork, violate the Shabbat, eat bread on Pesah, and do not die. Why? Because we learn from this *pasuk*: these are the *misvot* that I gave you, (*v’chai bahem*), and you should live by them. The *Gemara* [Sanhedrin 74a] interprets this to mean, “You should live by them, and not die by them.”

A cursory look at this *pasuk* seems to indicate that the Torah is saying that human life is more precious than keeping the *misvot*. Therefore, if you have a choice between observing Shabbat and staying alive, your life is more valuable than the *misvah*. This is a general rule: life is more important than the *misvot*, with just three exceptions.

Rav Moshe Feinstein Zt”l, in his *sefer* “*Igrot Moshe*,” says (in the course of answering a query on a different subject) that this common understanding of the *pasuk* is incorrect. That is not what the *pasuk* is saying, and this is as basic as a *Targum Onkelos*. [The *Targum Onkelos* is a nearly literal translation to Aramaic of the words in the Torah, with a minimum of interpolated commentary.]

The *Targum Onkelos* translates: “and you should live through them in the World to Come.” In other words, the *pasuk* is not telling us to stay alive and neglect the *misvot*, because life is more precious than *misvot*. The *pasuk* is telling us that the most precious thing in life is keeping *misvot*, because they bring us to *olam haba*, the World to Come.

Therefore, if I have a choice between observing the Shabbat or being murdered, the Torah says, “live!” Why? Not because life, for its own sake, is more precious than G-d’s Commandments. Rather, life is precious because you can do those Commandments! Therefore, do work on this Shabbat so you can keep so many more

Shabbatot in the future. Eat *hamess* [leaven] on Pesach. Why? So you can go on and do more *misvot*, and be worthy of life in the world to come.

This is an entirely different perspective. Life is not valuable just for the sake of life itself, without a purpose. Life is not valuable simply in order for a person to work, do errands and go to ball games. What does make life worth living? “*V’chai bahem*” – “*l’chayei alma*” [in the world to come]. This life leads to a goal.

The Torah is telling us to violate the Shabbat and to eat *hamess* on Pesah. Why? Because a human life is valuable because it can do so many more *misvot* in this world. Therefore, violate the Shabbat once so that you can observe Shabbat many more times. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Not Half a Loaf

There is a very famous *Gemara* (Shabbat 31a): “There was once an incident of a certain Gentile who came before Shammai and said to him ‘Convert me on the condition that you can teach me the entire Torah while I stand on one foot’. Shammai pushed him away with the building plank that he had in his hand. The Gentile then came before Hillel who converted him. Hillel told him ‘That which is hateful to you do not do to your friend. This is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary – go study it.’”

However, this *Talmudic* passage is very difficult. How could have Hillel said that “this constitutes the entire Torah”? At best this principle might encapsulate the laws between man and his fellow man. But what does this have to do with the laws between man and G-d? What about the prohibitions of *Shaatez* [forbidden mixtures], pig consumption and *Abodah Zarah* [idolatry]. What about *Emunah* [belief in G-d], *Succah*, *Pesah*, *Matzah* and *hamess*? Where are all these alluded to? It seems that Hillel gave the Gentile only “half a loaf”, so to speak. What is the meaning of this *Gemara*?

The *Ramban* asks: How does one reach this level that he wants for his friend as much as he has for himself? The *Ramban* answers that he must remove the unseemly attribute of jealousy from his heart. Of course not being jealous is easier said than done. One of the most basic of all human feelings is envy. So what is this “easy formula” that the *Ramban* is offering? Getting rid of envy is a great idea but how do I do that?

In my humble opinion, there is only one way to rid oneself of the natural tendency to be envious and that is to become a believer – to become a “*ma’amin*” — a believer in the concept of *Hashgachah Peratit* [personal Divine Providence]. We need to internalize the belief that the *Ribono shel Olam* gives each and every single one of us exactly what we need to function in this world in order to fulfill our mission in this world. What we don’t have, we don’t need!

Therefore, I have no problem if my friend drives a better car than I do. I don’t need that car. I have no problem if my friend makes a lot more money than I do. I don’t need that much money. I believe with a complete belief (*Ani ma’amin b’Emunah shlemah...*) that everything I have in this world is what I need – nothing less and nothing more. This is how a person removes jealousy from his heart.

Admittedly, coming to this level is not so simple. But, that is the approach one must take in order to move in that direction. It is the only approach. We need to fully believe that the Almighty is keenly aware of who I am and what I need and He has given me everything that I do need and that I do not need anything else. Therefore, I am completely content if somebody else lives in a much nicer house than I do. I do not need that house. G-d knows what is good for me. This is how one rids himself of the attribute of envy.

So this concept of wanting for your friend exactly what you have and not harming your friend and treating him like you would want to be treated is inextricably bound up

with the *misvah* of *Emunah*. *Emunah* is in fact *kol haTorah kulah* [the entirety of Torah]. This is why Hillel can make the statement to the potential convert: This is the essence of the entire Torah! The attitude of “that which is hateful to you, do not do to