

Ethics of the Fathers

"Be very very humble" (Pirke Abot 4:4)

∇♥φΥρ κ□π♣α η↓υΥω σ↔τ♣ν σ↔τ♣ν∇ Pirke Abot is filled with moral lessons and advice. Yet, more emphasis ("very very") is placed on this statement than on any other. Why is humility given such great importance, more than any other trait?

It is known that in this world there is no reward for *misvot*. Rather, the rewards are all in the next world. The reason for this is that all the benefits a person can possibly get in this world would not be enough payment for even one *misvah*. This is because *misvot* are spiritual in nature. They cannot be rewarded with material things, because the payment would not correspond to the deed. However, if one receives honor for a *misvah*, he is getting some compensation for his deed, since honor is spiritual in nature.

This is what this *Mishnah* is warning us. If someone seeks honor and receives it, he is using up his merits for which he was to be rewarded in the World to Come. One should be exceedingly humble and run away from honor, because he has no idea how much of his future reward he may be using up for a fleeting moment of praise and honor. (Hafess Hayim al HaTorah)

Sticks and Stones

"Speech is the dignity and greatness of mankind. Speech means communication - to teach, to give advice. Speech means friendship. Speech means the transmission of the entire Torah. The ability to speak should make a person bend over in gratitude as he says in the Amida, we gratefully Thank You."

Sticks and Stones can break one's bones but speaking down to others can have a lasting effect. It's important for us to use this gift to help others and encourage them towards their physical and spiritual goals. (Norman D. Levy, Based on Rabbi Miller's teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Yeshiva Gedola Bais Israel)

Flying Angels

"Tell me," said a priest to the *gaon*, Rabbi Yonatan Eibishitz, when the two met in the streets of Prague. "How can you claim that our religion is false? Millions the world over believe in Christianity. It is impossible that almost the entire world is mistaken. How would they accept something if there was no basis for it?"

R' Yonatan asked for a few minutes to answer. He stood on the pavement, and gazed skyward. Passersby, noting the esteemed Rabbi looking up, lifted their eyes, too, to see what he could be looking at. Soon a large crowd had gathered. Each passerby wondered what they could be looking at, and looked upwards. In minutes, tens of people stood on the pavement, necks craned, eyes searching the heavens.

R' Yonatan pointed his finger above his head. "Do you see swarms of angels flying about?" he asked the man standing beside him.

"No," said the man.

"Look again. There." The Rabbi pointed to the right. "Don't you see?" He moved his finger slowly to the left, as though following the angels' path in the sky.

"Yes, now I can see it!" exclaimed the man, as he too pointed eagerly upward.

"I see it too," said a third man, and then a fourth and a fifth.

In minutes, every man on the street was deeply engrossed in observing the angels in their heavenly flight.

R' Yonatan turned to the priest. "I don't see even one angel in the sky, but half of Prague is watching angels fly about on my say so. Now I ask you," he continued. "Is it possible to fool multitudes?" (Brilliant Gems)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition
 װ"ηηfω□χ, □X ω♦τ□κ, ♦ν♣α↔°β ηΥκη□γ□κ

σ□ξχ

Congregation Magen Abraham

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



SHABBATBEHAR ☆ ρ♥ω□X, □X♥↑
 Haftarah: Yirmiyahu 32:6-27

MAY 24-25, 2019 20 IYAR 5779

| | |
|---|---|
| Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 6:43 & 7:30 pm | Shaharit: 4:34, 6:40, 8:10, 9:15 am |
| Candlelighting: 7:55 pm | Morning Shema by: 8:16 am |
| Evening Shema & Omer after: 8:53 pm | Shabbat Classes: 6:35 pm |
| Day 35 of the Omer | Shabbat Minhah: 7:35 pm |
| | Shabbat Ends: 8:54 pm (R" T 9:26 pm) |
| These times are applicable <u>only</u> for the Deal area. | Sunday Minhah: 7:00 pm |

This bulletin is dedicated by the Betesh family
 in loving memory of Sharon Betesh
 װ♦ρ♦α, □χ υ|ρ♦α, ♦ν♣α↔°β ηΥκη□γ□κ

This bulletin is dedicated by Mitchell & Robin Antar
 in memory of Rose Antar לעילוי נשמת רוז בת אסתר

This bulletin is dedicated by the Hazan family
 in memory of Isaac Hazan
 װ"βηfρ □χ ε♦φ□μ°η, ♦ν♣α↔°β ηΥκη□γ□κ

Rabbi Dabbah will be giving a ladies' class every Shabbat one hour before Minhah in memory of Naomi bat Zakia.

Condolences to Michelle and Raymond Levy on the passing of Michelle's mother, Norma Srour.

A Message from our Rabbi

"וְשַׁבְּתָהּ הָאָרֶץ שְׁבַת לַה'" style="text-align: right;">"

"The land shall observe a Shabbat rest for Hashem." (Vayikra 25:2)

The *misvah* of *Shemitah* seems very difficult to observe. A farmer must let all of his land rest, no planting, for one full year. Imagine today if the Torah required us to close our business for one year. The test would seem too great. Would there be any

business to go back to after a year? But many Jewish farmers observe *Shemittah* today. How do they do it? Let's explain the dynamics of a test which will shed light on the subject.

Rabbi Avraham Neuberger tells a *mashal*. Shuffling along with his slight stoop, the man looked to be in his mid-60's. In fact, he was about 15 years younger, but he was struggling under the weight of huge debts. He was heading home from his shop in the diamond district where he worked as a watch repairman, when he noticed a shiny object on the ground, partially hidden by some garbage. He half-heartedly kicked the refuse aside, which revealed that the object was a watch.

With a passing glance his trained eye realized it was a Rolex and he thought, "Of course, just another cheap knock-off," and was about to walk on. But then he figured that he could always give it to his grandson. So he bent down to pick it up and his eyes widened. He immediately realized that this was the real McCoy. It was a high-end model worth upward of \$25,000. He could easily sell this in an off-market and the funds would greatly reduce his burden. He flipped the watch over and his heart sank. Engraved of course was a serial number, All he had to do was make a couple of inquiries to find out where the watch had been sold and he could locate the buyer.

The whole way home he was dreaming how great it would be to be debt-free. But, even before he stepped into his house, he knew he would return the watch. He came in, said hello to his wife, and after a couple of phone calls located the owner. The fellow was ecstatic. He came racing over to the finder's home, of course, in his high-end vehicle, picked up the watch, dropped off a nominal reward, and was off.

Whenever the watch repairman reflected back on this incident, he felt a great sense of satisfaction. He knew it wasn't easy and he was proud of his decision. Although he was a very humble man, he clearly enjoyed it when his children would relate the story. He was proud of doing the right thing.

This pleasure was always remembered and although he had other instances of this test, it wasn't even a struggle. So too the farmer on *Shemittah*; it was a source of pleasure, not a struggle. May we also derive much pleasure in the opportunities presented to us. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

It's Not Me

In this week's reading, we learn about *Shemittah*, the Sabbatical of the Land. The Torah says: "Six years shall you sow your field...and gather its produce. But in the seventh year, it will be a Holy Sabbath, a Sabbath to G-d; you shall not sow your field."

The *Kli Yakar* teaches a powerful lesson. A person could think that the land is his, and he can do as he wishes with it. If he is intelligent and uses good strategic planning, then his fields will flourish, and he will deserve credit in accordance with his expertise.

This, says the *Kli Yakar*, is a mistake. With the *misvah* of *Shemittah*, the Sabbath of the land in the seventh year, G-d tells us that the land is His, and all success is His. "Six years shall you sow your field" is a *guarantee*, which applies in Israel when the Temple is standing and the land is fully ours. The Torah says that a person during those times can plant a field for a full six years, and the field will not become weak. There will be no need for crop rotation and other strategies to keep the land fertile.

Not only this, but we are promised that fields will flourish precisely when they should be weakest. "I have commanded my blessing to you in the sixth year, and you will produce grain for three years." G-d promises that the land will be blessed — not the year following *Shemittah*, but immediately before it, when it should be underperforming due to overuse.

Once we know this, that the field will be at its best in the sixth year, we understand

that letting the field rest in the seventh is not for natural benefits. It is not for the land's benefit, but for ours. *Shemittah* helps us to recognize that ultimately it is not our own efforts that bring success. Our efforts are merely the necessary vessel, the receptacle of G-d's blessing. So we do not need to overwork in order to succeed.

Where, then, must we devote our efforts? The answer comes in next week's reading, *Behukotai*. "If you will follow My statutes...then I have given your rains in their time and the land will give its produce, and the tree of the field will give its fruit." [26:3-4] And *Rashi* asks, if the Torah says "observe My laws," than what is intended by "follow My statutes?" And he answers: "that you will toil in Torah."

The Torah first tells us, don't spend too much time on material pursuits, as Hashem determines who is truly successful. So where should we invest our efforts? We must "toil in Torah," and that will bring — material success! Doing *misvot* and learning Torah is what brings true riches into our lives.

Torah is where we need to invest our efforts, to learn and to grow. And it is the one area where we are guaranteed to see our efforts meet with success! (Rabbi Yaakov Menken)

Paying It Forward

Lending with interest is something that (for Jews) is taboo. Hashem demands a certain kinship between brothers and sisters that prevents them from profiting from those who — through their misfortune — need loans. Thus the Torah commands: "If your brother becomes impoverished and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him, proselyte or resident, so that he can live with you. Do not take from him interest and increase; and you shall fear your G-d — and let your brother live with you. Do not give him your money for interest, and do not give your food for increase."

The Torah then says: "I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan." What connection could exist between the prohibition against taking interest from Jews and the exodus from Egypt?

Rabbi Paysach Krohn relates the story of a 40-year old man who passed away and left a young widow and orphans. The oldest son, Yosef, took the helm of his father's business as the breadwinner for the surviving children. It was not easy; competitors took advantage of his naivete and inexperience. One day, in the midst of his struggles, a Mr. Hans approached him with an envelope containing \$2000. Yosef was taken aback. "Please," he said, "I am working to make a living. I do not want any charity!"

Mr. Hans explained. "Take it as a loan. When things get better you can repay me." It took almost two years, but the time came when Yosef was on his feet. He went to see Mr. Hans. In his hand was an envelope containing two thousand dollars.

"I am not taking the money," said Mr. Hans.

"But," retorted Yosef, "you said it was only a loan!"

Hans smiled and nodded his head. "It was, but sit down and let me explain.

"A while back I was in difficult straits. A fellow named Mr. Stein came to me with money. I, like you, did not want to accept it. Mr. Stein assured me that the money was merely a loan, and I accepted it. Within a few years, I was able to pay it back.

"When I approached Mr. Stein, he refused to accept the money. When I began arguing with him, he explained. I want you to pay it back, but pay it in the following manner: When you see someone else struggling, lend him the two thousand dollars. And when he comes to pay it back, you too shall refuse. Then explain to him the terms I just told you. Yosef understood the message and followed the instructions. Somewhere out there in our community, those two thousand dollars are floating around, while waiting to be returned, rather loaned, once again. The *K'tav Sofer* explains: When we left Egypt, we should have left with just the shirts on our backs. But this was not so. We

left with gold and silver from the Egyptians, and after the splitting of the *Yam Suf* our portfolios increased measurably with the Egyptian booty that washed ashore. G-d gave all of that to us. But he stipulated one minor request. When we take the wealth He gave us and pass it around, we are asked not to derive any benefit from it. We are told lend it to your brothers without a profit. We owe the Almighty for all we have. The least we can do is pay it forward without interest. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)