

Paws and Reflect

Rabbi Shmuel Salant (1816-1909), Rav of Jerusalem for close to seventy years, was known for his brilliant insights and innovative approach to deciding religious questions. People constantly came to his door, seeking his council, advice and wisdom.

One day a simple-minded woman came to ask a *she'elah* (religious question). She was very disturbed about a careless thing she had done, and was worried about the possibility of a serious consequence. As she began to relate her problem, some of Rabbi Shmuel Salant's students moved a bit closer so as to gain insight in how to rule in the future.

"I had some meat that was not yet ritually salted [and therefore not yet kosher] out on a counter," the woman began. "And before I could remove it, my cat came and ate the non-koshered meat. Rabbi," she inquired, "what is the status of my cat?"

The students who were listening could hardly control themselves from laughing. The question was ludicrous. However, out of respect to their Rabbi, the students controlled themselves from bursting out in laughter and waited for the reply.

Rabbi Salant opened one of the books on his desk and began to look through it as the woman waited anxiously. After leafing through some pages, R' Shmuel said to the woman, "You must remember never to do this again. What you did, could at some time in the future, lead to a serious problem. If you leave meat like that on the counter, a Jew could eat that meat in error! But for now, you can keep your cat. Its status remains as it was before. You are free from worry and concern."

The woman thanked the Rabbi profusely and left. When she was out the door, R' Shmuel turned to the students who were now giggling. "Let me tell you something about judgments on religious rulings," he said. "It is imperative for you to remember that whenever a person comes to ask a *she'elah* you must always treat the question and the questioner with dignity and respect. If you laugh at or scorn the question, even though such a reaction may be well deserved, the person will refrain from coming back in the future, when the question may really be a serious one. Your answer and demeanor today will affect the bringing of questions tomorrow."

This is a thought worth remembering by impatient teachers, parents and employers as well. (In the Footsteps of the *Maggid*)

The Lorraine Gammal A"ℋ Edition
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SHABBAT EMOR ☆ ρ↔vΥτ, □X♥↑

Haftarah: Yehezkel 44:15-31

MAY 12-13, 2017 17 IYAR 5777

Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 6:35 & 7:15 pm Shahrarit: 4:43, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am

Candlelighting: **7:44 pm**

Morning Shema by: **8:23 am**

Evening Shema and Omer after: **8:42 pm**

Shabbat Class: **6:15 pm**

Day 32 of the Omer

Shabbat Minhah: **7:25 pm**

Shabbat Ends: 8:43 pm (R"t 9:15)

Sunday Minhah: **7:00 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

***Lag Ba'Omer* will be celebrated on Sunday, May 14.**

**This bulletin is dedicated by the Hazan family
in memory of Isaac Hazan**

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A Message from Our Rabbi

”קְדָשִׁים יִהְיוּ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִחַלְלוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵיהֶם”

“They shall be holy to their G-d and they shall not desecrate the Name of their G-d.” (*Vayikra* 21:6)

The Torah states that *Kohanim* shall be holy to G-d and they shall not desecrate His Name. This teaches us that a *Kohen* who falls short of holiness is guilty of desecrating Hashem's Name. Why is it considered desecrating Hashem's Name if one does not become holy? Surely there is a big gap between one who falls short of holiness and one who desecrates Hashem's Name?

Rabbi Eli Scheller explains with a parable. When a manager of a baseball team is choosing players, he only chooses those that he believes have tremendous potential. The players he picks, he believes, will perform incredibly well and they will assist the team in winning the championship. If one of the players begins goofing off, it will reflect poorly on the team and on the manager. The manager needs each player to be the best he can be in his position, not merely mediocre.

So too, when Hashem – the Ultimate Manager – chooses His players in this world, He only chooses those that can become great and accomplish big things. Hashem assigned every individual a position and a mission which, if he fails to complete,

reflects negatively on the whole team. A person who is merely average isn't fulfilling his mission in life and he thereby desecrates Hashem's Name.

A *Kohen*, and perhaps all of us, make up Hashem's team.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Misvah Vigilante

The Torah tells us in this week's *perashah*, "u'shmartem et misvotai, v'aseetem otam — watch the *misvot* and do them" (*Vayikra* 22:31). What does "watch *misvot*" mean? If one does a *misvah* he is surely doing more than watching them. Watching *misvot* seems quite passive. Observant Jew is a term used for those who actually perform them and adhere to the laws, and the curious word observant, perhaps, indeed comes from the Hebrew word *u'shmartem*. But doesn't Hashem want us to be more than just watchers? If He tells us to do *misvot*, then surely we watch them! Why the double, if not redundant, expression? I once went to be pay a *shivah* call to a friend, Rabbi Zissel Zelman, who was sitting *shivah* for his father. He is a Chicago native whose father, Rabbi Zelman, grew up in Chicago way before Torah Judaism had flourished there. Reb Zissel related that as a young man, his father would pass the newsstand every Saturday night after shul to pick up a paper. As he did not carry money with him, he had made an arrangement with the vendor to return on Sunday morning to pay him.

Rabbi Zelman was not interested in the sports pages nor was he interested in the headlines. In fact, he was not interested in the paper altogether. Rabbi Zelman bought the paper for his mother. She also was not interested in the sports or the news. She was interested in the dead. Every Saturday night she would comb the paper looking for announcements of tombstone unveilings that were to take place on Sunday at the Jewish Cemeteries. An unveiling is a time when people are charitable, and the elderly Mrs. Zelman would go to the cemeteries and raise funds from the gathered for Yeshivot in Europe and Israel. She would eventually turn the coins into bills and send the money overseas. A plaque hangs today in the Slobodka Yeshiva in Israel commemorating her efforts.

Perhaps the Torah is telling us more than just doing *misvot*. It is telling us to watch for *misvot*. Be on guard. There are hundreds of opportunities to find *misvot* and to do them. But we must be observant and vigilant. There are hundreds of *misvot* that pass by our very eyes. Scores of Good Mornings. Hundreds of packages we can help lift, as well as spirits. There are hundreds of hearts we can help heal as well as small acts of charity we can fulfill. Perhaps the Torah is telling us more than watch the *misvot* that come our way. Perhaps it may be telling us to be on the lookout for those that are out there waiting for us to observe them! (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

The Mekoshesh and Mekallel

"And they placed him in jail." (*Vayikra* 24:12)

וַיִּנְיְחֵהוּ בַּמִּשְׁכָּן

The son of Shelomit bat Dibri blasphemed the Name of Hashem throughout the camp of the Israelites and was brought before Moshe. Moshe and the Children of Israel, awaiting further instruction from Hashem, were left to their own reasoning in dealing with him. *Rashi* relates that they placed him in a different cell than the *mekoshesh* - the one who desecrated Shabbat - who happened to be incarcerated at the same time. The *mekoshesh* was awaiting his punishment - death. The fate of the

mekallel - the one who cursed Hashem - was not yet to be decided. Had they been put together, the *mekallel* would have assumed that his penalty was also death, which was not yet certain. This undoubtedly would prompt the *mekallel* to feel a degree of anguish. To avoid this unnecessary suffering, *B'nei Yisrael* decided to keep the two sinners separated.

The *Da'at Zekenim* notes that the Children of Israel were unsure if the one who cursed Hashem was even worthy of death. Their reasoning was such: One who curses his parents receives capital punishment. *B'nei Yisrael* inferred that, naturally, cursing Hashem is worse. Perhaps his sin is so great that he would not be allowed any chance of atonement in this world and therefore his punishment should remain totally in the hands of Hashem. If the *mekallel* was deemed so despicable as to deserve a fate worse than death, why did the Children of Israel go out of their way to insure that he should not wrongly assume that he was on death row?

The Children of Israel were setting an example for us. We must be sensitive, to the greatest degree, of everyone's feelings and needs. True, the *mekallel* was wicked and immoral and deserved the greatest punishment possible. Nevertheless, the Israelites had the responsibility to uphold his human dignity and avoid causing him any undue pain.

The lesson for us is obvious. Even if our neighbor is base and corrupt, we cannot hurt him or his feelings unnecessarily. How much more so must we be responsive and sympathetic to the needs and feelings of friends and family?

The message of the days of the *omer* is not merely one of abstinence from pleasure, but one of caring for our fellow man. The twenty-four thousand students of Rabbi Akiba died in this time period because they, in some slight way, did not respect each other as people of their stature should have. The Torah requires and expects us to act towards everyone with the greatest amount of compassion and love imaginable. By putting in every extra effort in this time of *sefirat ha'omer*, we will be well on our way to preparing ourselves for Shabuot and accepting the Torah. (Majesty of Man)

Pirke Abot

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

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

מְאֹד מְאֹד הָרִי שָׁפֹל רוּחַ

Pirke Abot is filled from beginning to end with moral lessons and advice. Yet, more emphasis ("very very") is placed on this statement than on any other. It is almost as if there is some kind of danger in being conceited or in seeking honor. 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 about. 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*)