

should attribute it to his own lack of knowledge or weak comprehension.

The *misvah* to believe in the existence of Hashem and in His involvement in the world is a *misvah* that can be fulfilled at all times. It is recommended that a person should periodically declare that he believes in Hashem and in His involvement in every detail of every person's life - that he rewards every good action, speech or thought, and he punishes for every one of our improper deeds, words or thoughts. This will help a person to maintain a high level of *emunah* at all times.

Law and Order

The following story took place on a *moshav* (settlement) in Israel that was comprised mostly of *shomer Shabbat* families. All workers in the *moshav* knew that they had to stop their work before Shabbat. Working on Shabbat was simply not an option. One Friday evening, however, one of the members of the *moshav* ran into the shul in a frenzy. Right outside the limits of the *moshav*, a team of construction workers repairing the road were still working as Shabbat approached, and they appeared to be in no rush to leave. This member of the *moshav* had pleaded with the crew to wrap up now and return on Sunday morning but they would hear nothing of it. The bulldozers, dump trucks and other miscellaneous vehicles rumbled along, and a crowd of protesters quickly gathered. Something had to give, as the two sides were on a collision course.

Finally, the confrontation came to a head as a man in his late fifties, heavily tanned and sporting a healthy build, stepped forward. As foreman on the site, he declared that he would be more than willing to continue the job on Sunday as long as he received orders from the "Big Boss." And as of yet, he had not. Hearing this, the uproar increased, with no apparent resolution in sight.

Suddenly, a diminutive man stepped forward. Everyone knew Moshe, but he was a quiet person who rarely drew attention to himself. Moshe made his way to the front of the crowd and addressed the foreman, "You're waiting for a notification? Is that what you're waiting for?"

Moshe rolled up his sleeves and it appeared that he was preparing for a fight – although he was the least likely person to revert to physical assault. By now Moshe was standing front and center, staring at the foreman, passion in his voice and fire in his eyes. "Do you need a certificate that we are all Jews and that the Torah commands us to keep the Holy Shabbat?" Bracing for the inevitable, the group prepared themselves for the battle of words to escalate into a full-blown fistfight. But suddenly Moshe thrust his arm forward, "Here it is! Branded into my arm! It is my membership number. It was burned into my arm in Auschwitz so that I would never forget that I am a Jew! No matter what, no matter when!" Pointing to his arm, Moshe screamed, "This is where it is written. Here it is! Is this not enough of a command from our Supervisor that we can never work on His Shabbat?!" Moshe, his eyes filled with tears, stopped; his heavy breathing could be heard by all. His pain and pride had joined together in one unforgettable moment. Then, slowly, Moshe rolled down his sleeve, turned, and walked away.

Suddenly the foreman ran after him and grabbed him, "I know! I also know!" He too rolled up his sleeve and bared the numbers tattooed on his arm. They stared together at their numbers, and then cried on each other's shoulders. The entire assemblage watched the awesome sight of these two survivors sharing an eternal, unspoken bond. Members of the same "club," the emotional foreman hugged his new friend and promised that not only would he stop working now, but he would never work on Shabbat again!

After all, the "Big Boss" had given the order. (Touched by a Story 3)

The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמָת לֹאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT VAYESHEB ☆ עֶשֶׂת יְמֵי

Haftarah: Amos 2:6-3:8

DECEMBER 16-17, 2022 23 KISLEV 5783

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **4:03 pm (upstairs)** Shaharit: **6:17, 6:45, 8:25, 8:30, 9:00 am**

Minhah: **4:13 (main shul)** Morning Shema by: **9:00 am**

Candlelighting: **4:13 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **1:30 & 3:50 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:11 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **5:11 pm, R"T 5:43 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shabbat Class: **3:40 & 5:11 pm**

Weekday Shaharit: **6:45, 7:10 am, Sundays: 8:15 am, Weekday Minhah: 4:15 pm**

**This bulletin is dedicated by Steven Levy
in memory of his father, Eliyahu ben Simbol.**

A Message from our Rabbi

"וַיִּמְצְאוּהוּ אִישׁ וְהָיָה תַּעֲהָ בַּשָּׂדֶה"

"And a man discovered him and behold he was blundering in the field"
(Bereshheet 37:15)

We read about Ya'akov *Abinu* sending Yosef out to search for his brothers. A man found him and directed him toward his brothers. After Yosef met them, they sold him into slavery and he spent the rest of his life in Egypt.

Rabbi David Ashear quotes the *Ramban* who asks a very relevant question. Why does the Torah tell us these seemingly insignificant details about Yosef becoming lost and then being given directions? He answers that the Torah is teaching us a very valuable lesson about the way Hashem runs the world. Yosef had every reason to turn back and return home to his father. Seemingly, he should have. Hashem, however, had a different plan. Just at the right moment, Hashem sent a man, who our Sages tell us was the angel Gabriel, to direct Yosef to where he needed to go.

It was all set up by Hashem. Many times in life, people find themselves in unwelcome situations. They start backtracking in their minds, trying to figure out how they ended up there. They wonder, what if I didn't say yes? What if I didn't ask that person advice?

While Yosef was a slave in Egypt, he could have easily thought to himself, what if I had turned back one minute earlier? What if I didn't listen to that man? My life would have been so different right now! In the words of the *Ramban*, the Torah is telling us that the decree of Hashem is truth, and effort is falsehood. Of course, we are obligated

to make rational decisions and to do what we feel is correct, but we must know that we are all being influenced by Hashem. Through circumstances, He is leading us to where we need to be.

It is good to know that we are where we are supposed to be. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Hashem is Peeking

What a stirring saga! Yosef is betrayed and conspired against by his brothers and then thrown into a dark pit where he is doomed to die. At the last moment, the brothers pull him out. Broken in body and spirit, he endures the additional humiliation of being sold as a common slave to a passing trading caravan. What could possibly be more devastating? How utterly hopeless Yosef's plight appears to be!

In the midst of this horrible scene, the Torah tells us that G-d lightened Yosef's suffering by arranging that the caravan of traders that had purchased him were carrying fine perfumes and spices. A pleasant fragrance wafted through the air around him as he made his way down to Egypt.

Here Yosef is being sold into slavery with no prospects of ever being freed. Betrayed by his brothers, he is at the mercy of lawless people who could abuse and exploit him at will. At such a harrowing time, would he be likely to notice the scent around him? What difference would it make to him in his pain and misery?

Yet, we must bear in mind that the Torah informs us about the spices in the caravan for a reason. Embedded in this dire and painful event was a secret note from Hashem to Yosef: 'Don't worry Yosef, I love you and I will spare you whatever suffering I can. Look, even here, in your miserable and wretched condition I will show you that I am peeking out from behind the curtain by sending you this little ray of positive encouragement. If only you can decipher my message of caring and love!'

Our lives are a long chain of challenges and difficulties. Although these hardships may be divinely ordained to tone up our spiritual muscles and help us grow, it is often difficult to recognize them as such. Yet, if we are attuned, we can pinpoint moments in our lives when Hashem demonstrates that he is watching from behind the curtain. All of us can be grateful for the seemingly small but infinitely valuable daily gifts and special messages with which Hashem lets us know that He is taking care of us.

Be it with the blessings of good health, our precious children, beloved family and friends or the innumerable other gifts we enjoy, we are constantly graced with Hashem's loving beneficence. By training our emotions to always operate in thankful mode, we can weather life's disappointments. However, if we allow ourselves to fall into the mode of "entitlement," as if we are owed life's blessings and luxuries, we will inevitably suffer a spiritual and emotional setback. (Rabbi Naftali Reich)

Good Intentions

Often, it is hard to discern between acts of good intent, and of good intent mired with selfishness. This week we read two similar stories that are in reality very different and have very different endings. Tamar was the wife of Yehudah's son, Er. When he died, Yehudah gave her his next son, Onan. Tamar knew that she was destined to mother the seed of Yehudah, and that seed would eventually father King David. But Onan died too. And Yehudah refused to give her his last son Shelah. Tamar was desperate for Yehudah's seed. She hid her face, dressed as a prostitute, and seduced Yehudah himself. Yehudah, unaware of who his courtesan was, reacted in horror when he was told that Tamar was with child. "Take her and have her put to death," he ruled. Tamar's plans were almost for naught. She would never bear the seed that she envisioned.

The wife of Potiphar also had a vision. She saw in the stars that she and Yosef would breed greatness. She tried to seduce him. She too wanted to fulfill her vision. But Yosef refused time and time again. He finally fled, together with her visions.

Rav Yeruchom Levovitz asks a powerful question. Both of these women had visions, and though their methodology was unconventional, why is there so much disparity as to their status? Tamar is viewed as the righteous woman who desperately wanted a child from Yehudah. She is known as the Mother of The Kingdom of David. Yet the wife of Potiphar is treated as an adulterous two-timer who tries to seduce Yosef and then throws him into jail. In what way is she so different than Tamar?

Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebowitz, *Rosh Yeshiva* in Kaminetz, Poland, had a difficult time getting his older daughter married off. When an outstanding student of his accepted a marriage proposal, Reb Boruch Ber was overjoyed. He knew this young man to be a both a scholar and gentleman. As engagements in those days would endure for a long time, he suggested to the young man to continue his studies, uninterrupted, in a distant city.

One could not imagine the shock Reb Boruch Ber had when two months later a package arrived. In it was the watch and other gifts that Reb Boruch Ber had given the young man on his engagement. An enclosed note tersely stated that for personal reasons the engagement was off. The bride and her parents were both devastated.

A few years later Rabbi Lebowitz called in three of his closest students to a private meeting. "I'd like you to read this letter and tell me if I have infected it with my personal pain," he told them. The students read the letter and stood in awe. A community was seeking a recommendation concerning an applicant for a rabbinical position there. The scholar had learned in Kaminetz and asked Rabbi Lebowitz for a letter of recommendation. The candidate was none other than the formerly engaged student. Rav Lebowitz wrote a beautiful letter, flowing with praise, but was worried that perhaps his personal bitterness may have dulled the response. He called his best students to approve. They knew of the incident and were amazed by the praises Rabbi Lebowitz had written.

Rav Yeruchom explains: every action has a litmus test that reveals true intentions: Failure. When one fails does one look to heaven and say, "G-d, I tried but I failed. Now it is up to you. "Or does one scream and curse and perhaps even destroy to get his way? Many people begin noble missions, but when they fail, personal vendettas arise.

Tamar failed, and when Yehudah sentenced her for becoming pregnant from out of the family, she did not embarrass him by pointing an accusatory finger. She just showed the items he left behind and said, "I am pregnant from the owner of this staff, seal and wrap." Fortunately, Yehudah admitted his folly, and she was spared. Her children were King David's grandparents.

Potiphar's wife's vision ended as Yosef fled. She could have said, "G-d, I tried to fulfill the dream, now it's up to you." (It actually was, as Yosef married her daughter!) She didn't. She reacted with a vengeance and accused him falsely. Yosef was sent to prison. Potiphar's wife is forever branded as an evil temptress.

Sometimes the experience of failure destroys the nobility of mission. Only those acts that are bred with purity of purpose remain unscathed. They continue to flourish with honor in the face of adversity. Ultimately, they succeed, and we reap the fruits of that success for many years to come. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

Weekly Pele Yoetz

Each week we will offer a brief excerpt from the *sefer Pele Yoetz*. **This week's topic is: *Emunah* – Faith in Hashem (Part II).**

A fundamental aspect of *emunah* is to believe in the authenticity of the Torah and of the Rabbis, and to accept that if any of their words do not make sense to a person, he