

on-one conversation, impolite as it may be. But, very often, “know-it-alls” really do not know what others mean to say. In fact, their guesses are frequently contrary to what is intended. Think back to situations when someone cut you off while you were trying to express an idea, and you will realize that more often than not, the interrupter did not understand what you wanted to convey.

The “interrupt syndrome” is caused by people wrongly assuming that everyone thinks the way they do. Our Sages teach, “A *hacham* (wise person) does not interrupt when another is speaking” (*Pirkei Avot* 5:9). Wise people spend their time listening and learning from all those whom they meet. The wisdom of Creation suggests that Hashem gave us two ears and one mouth so that we would understand that listening is more beneficial to our growth than speaking. It’s two against one!

When someone is trying to get a point across and you think you’ve got it, don’t interrupt. Your assumed conclusion may be correct, but it may also be wrong. Listen and learn. The minute of self-control will help you grow wiser as you opt for silence rather than fast talk. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### Clarity of the Mind

“Everyone has an obligation to thank Hashem daily for giving him a sound mind. We thank Hashem for our minds and ask Him to grant us continuity of mental function at the current level and even higher levels. To thank Hashem for our sanity is likely the most important of all our obligations of gratitude to him.

As children, we were born with clear minds. Following a Torah based life maintains proper brain function. Avoiding toxic atmospheres enables us to maintain a proper Clarity of the Mind to serve Hashem with humility and gratitude. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller’s teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

### Speech Therapy

Around a century ago, there lived a Maggid who used to travel throughout Lithuania imploring Jews to improve their observance of *misvot*. Once, he visited the *Hafess Hayim* in Radin and poured out his frustrations. “I am coming now from a community where I was dismayed to learn of the poor level of *misvah* observance among many families. Shabbat morning, I stood before the *Aron Hakodesh* and spoke about the urgent need for *teshubah*. I could not believe their reaction! Before I could finish my speech, some men charged forward and threatened to drag me away if I would not descend the pulpit on my own! What is the matter with these people? Why can’t they face the truth?”

The *Hafess Hayim* responded with a question of his own. “How did you speak when you delivered your reproof? Were you calm or did you get excited?”

“Why, of course I got excited!” replied the Maggid. “Those people are sinners and they had to be told in no uncertain terms that their behavior must change! I screamed, I pounded my fist on the lectern...and I explained the severity of what they had been doing. And I told them what’s going to happen to them if they don’t mend their ways!”

“Now I understand,” the *Hafess Hayim* responded. “Of course your words did not accomplish anything constructive. Tell me, my friend, when you put on *tefillin* in the morning, do you also shout and pound your fist? Certainly not, for that is not the way one performs a *misvah*. Well, offering *Tochachah* (reproof) to one’s fellow Jew is also a *misvah*. Nowhere does it say that this *misvah* is different than any other, that it must be carried out in a manner that is insulting and belittling to the person being criticized. Next time, speak to the people in a way that shows you care for them and that you respect them. No doubt, your words will then accomplish much more.” (Shabbos Stories)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת לָאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

## Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT YITRO ☆ יְתֵרוֹ

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 6:1-13

**FEBRUARY 14-15, 2020 20 SHEBAT 5780**

Friday Minhah: **5:12 pm**

Candlelighting: **5:12 pm**

Evening Shema after: **6:10 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: **5:51, 6:40, 8:10, 9:10 am**

Morning Shema by: **8:52 am**

Shabbat Minhah: **4:50 pm**

Shabbat Class: **3:50 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **6:11 pm (R"Y 6:43 pm)**

Sunday Minhah: **5:15 pm**

Starting this week, Rabbi Semah's *Perashah* class on Shabbat will be before *Minhah*. This week's class will begin at 3:50 pm

This bulletin is dedicated by Sammy & Pamela Kassin and family in loving memory of Rachel Kassin לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת רַחֵל בֵּת מִזֵּל

Mabrook to Nissim & Eugenia Lavi on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Natan & Raquel Telio.

### A Message from our Rabbi

”לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ”

“You shall not covet your friend’s house” (*Shemot* 20:14)

The most important event in Parashat Yitro is the Giving of the Torah and the Ten Commandments. The reason for the selection of most of the commandments in the Ten Commandments is self-evident. The obligation to believe in Hashem and observe Shabbat, and the prohibition against idolatry, murder and immorality all represent fundamental principles in Judaism.

However there is one apparent exception. It is unclear why the prohibition against coveting other people’s possessions is considered so central to Jewish belief and practice that it warranted such lofty status. While not being jealous is important, it seems to pale in importance relative to the other commandments. Even more remarkable, Harav Haim Vital zt”l writes that the tenth and final commandment is the culmination of nine commandments and is equal in weight to all of them combined!

Rabbi Ozer Alport explains this in the name of Harav Menahem Recanti zt”l. One who covets someone else’s possessions is in essence admitting that he does not really

believe in Hashem. One who truly believes in the all-powerful G-d, Who cares about each of His creations and wants to benefit them, will understand that Hashem gave him his spouse, job and house that he needs at this point in his life, and if he doesn't have something it is because Hashem knows that it is ultimately not in his best interest.

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler zt"l gives a beautiful *meshal* to illustrate this concept. While there are countless objects of which a person could be jealous, there is one item that nobody would ever covet – another person's glasses. As attractive as they may look on another person's face, we recognize that the prescription of the lenses is uniquely tailored to that person's eyes, and even if the glasses would enhance our appearance, they would distort our vision. Similarly everything that a person receives as his lot in life is Hashem's custom "prescription" for his *neshamah*. We should strive to internalize the belief that anything that belongs to somebody else, as appealing and enticing as it may appear, would not fit our *neshamah*.

From this perspective, we can now appreciate that a person who is jealous of others is lacking *emunah* and *bitahon*. The belief that every component of our lives is governed by Hashem's direct involvement is so fundamental that it was placed at the conclusion of the Ten Commandments to encapsulate the first nine commandments.

Remember that each person's lot in life is tailor made for him by Hashem, and in this way we will be able to feel gratitude and appreciation to Hashem for all of our blessings. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

## Perfection Correction

The perfect *Eitrog*: this is a dream of every *Ben-Torah*. One time there was a knock on the door of R' Akiva Eiger. Standing by the door was a man who wore a look of excitement on his face. "I brought an *Eitrog* as a present for the Rav. I would appreciate if the Rav would examine it." R' Akiva Eiger inspected the fruit, "It is truly a beautiful *Eitrog*. I have never seen such a perfect *Eitrog*." R' Akiva Eiger thanked the man for his kind gift and the man left his house.

R' Eiger placed the *Eitrog* on his shelf and returned to his studies. The household members were excited that the Rav received such a beautiful *Eitrog*. When *Succot* arrived however, their excitement turned to surprise, as the *Eitrog* remained untouched on the shelf. When they asked R' Eiger why he didn't use it, he said, "Bring me the *Eitrog* together with a sharp knife". He proceeded to cut the *Eitrog* in half. Only then was it revealed that the *Eitrog* was not real, rather it was made of wax. "It looked and felt so real. How did you know that it is not authentic?" they asked him in amazement.

The great Sage responded with the following priceless words: "From the day that the *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed there is nothing in the world that is perfect. Yet, here I saw before me the perfect *Eitrog*. I instantly realized that it must be a replica, it can't be real." It was later revealed that the *Eitrog* was made by the *Haskalah*, with the intent of fooling R' Eiger. R' Eiger however, outsmarted them with his Torah wisdom.

Perfectionists always strive for perfection in all of their actions. Before they start a project, they have every detail planned out to perfection. Offhand this would seem to be a positive trait; however, the pitfalls of perfectionism are so great that it can adversely affect your life, stunt your motivation for action, and rob you of your self-satisfaction. Thus, it is worth learning about this issue and how to overcome it.

A perfectionist does not allow himself to start a project until every detail is worked out. Often he will find himself procrastinating until the deadline and then he will cram everything in at last minute. Often he never ends up doing the project.

The greatest motivation in life is the sense of accomplishment. When you taste success, you are encouraged to continue. One who only experiences failure cannot

possibly be motivated. This is one of the pitfalls of perfectionism. Even if you are generally doing well, you still focus on the ten percent that was not accomplished, and you feel a sense of failure. This discourages you from trying in the future.

In truth, as R' Akiva Eiger stated, there is no such thing as perfection. Thus a perfectionist rarely feels a sense of accomplishment. Our job is to learn to appreciate direction, not perfection; for even if it's not perfect, it is the greatest accomplishment.

R' Shmuel Levin made the following remarkable observation. The one period in history that is considered the greatest time of spiritual growth was the time between *Yesiyat Misrayim* and *Matan Torah*. One would think that their road to ascent was direct without a glitch. Yet, when you take a deeper look you will notice that a great portion of the sins committed in the *midbar* were transgressed during this time period; from complaining about lack of food and drink, to questioning whether Hashem was amongst them or not. Even on the day of *Matan Torah* itself they slept in. Yet, it is still considered a time of growth, because this is the way things work in real life. On a heart monitor, if the line is straight it means that the person is dead. As long as you are alive there will constantly be ups and downs. Don't expect perfection; learn to recognize your accomplishments. (*Tiferes Yosef*)

## On Wings of Eagles

(Shemot 19:4)

וַיֹּאשֶׁא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וַאֲבָא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי

"And I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you unto Me"

*Sforno* explains that Hashem conveyed a message to the Children of Israel. An eagle carries her young on her shoulders, soaring higher than all other birds, to protect them. Similarly, Hashem took *B'nei Yisrael* out of Egypt into the barren desert, on a path untrodden by others. This was necessary to remove the newly formed nation from the immoral environment of Egypt. In order to purge the Israelites from the influence of their former surroundings and prepare them for the revelation on Mount Sinai, it was necessary to take them to a desolate area, devoid of any outside contact.

Why was this isolation required, considering the miraculous events the Israelites witnessed upon leaving Egypt? Wasn't the impact of seeing the ten plagues and the splitting of the Red Sea adequate to bring them closer to Hashem and prepare them for receiving the Torah? The *Sforno's* commentary gives us insight into the pervasive influence society has upon us, and tells us what we can do to counteract this influence.

Even experiencing fantastic miracles was not sufficient to shield the Israelites from the negative impact of the corrupt Egyptian culture. Only physical isolation in the barren desert enabled them to psychologically separate themselves from these destructive influences. This complete seclusion prepared them to receive the Torah.

We can implement this in our own lives. By separating ourselves, at least psychologically, from our permissive and materialistic society, we can protect ourselves from its subtle yet powerful influence. The *Hazon Ish* suggests that we can find refuge from our environment by frequenting the *bet hamidrash* and learning Torah. Besides being a sanctuary from the onslaught of contemporary society, the *bet hamidrash* is a place to reinforce ourselves and strengthen our resistance to the spiritual ailments so rampant in our environment. This has been the secret of Jewish survival throughout the ages, as applicable now as it was then. (Majesty of Man)

## Two Against One

When several people get together, it is not unusual for one to interrupt another's sentence with a quick "I know what you mean." Individuals even do this during a one-