

his life on a daily basis. As such, he will be more generous in his giving of charity.
(Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

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.

□ωχρω οηρχσκ ωφυζ ωνακ ωρυ,χ εξυγω κφ :ρνυτ ρητν ηχρ□
“Rabbi Meir says: Whoever occupies himself with the study of Torah for its own sake merits many things” (*Pirkei Abot* 6:1)

Why doesn't it say “*kol halomed*” - “whoever studies Torah”?

In every business, there is a primary difference between the employer and the employee. An employee is mainly concerned with his own tasks, and he does not need to think about the business during his off hours. Unlike the employer, who thinks about his business unceasingly, he has little concern for the business as a whole.

In Hebrew the word “*esek*” means “business.” Rabbi Meir teaches that a person's approach to Torah should be similar to an employer's attachment to his business. Even after he leaves the *Bet Midrash* and is home eating or sleeping, Torah should always be uppermost in his mind. (*Vedibarta Bam*)

A Blessing for Life

When R' Aryeh Leib Gunzberg, known by his work *Shaagat Aryeh*, was Rav in the town of Minsk, a kind-hearted widow named Bluma Vilenkin, whom everyone knew as Blum'ke, wished to assist the poverty-stricken *saddik*. She would lend him volumes of *Gemara* from the set of *Shas* her late husband had used.

The *Shaagat Aryeh* was very grateful to her for her generous assistance, appreciating her share in his Torah learning. Before he left the town of Minsk, he offered her his heartfelt blessings. “May Hashem bless you with wealth and honor, health and long life, and may you build places of Torah both in Minsk and Yerushalayim!”

R' Aryeh Leib's blessing soon was fulfilled. Blum'ke's life changed dramatically when she became a rich woman, and she generously supported Torah and those who studied it. She provided the money for a building in Minsk which housed a Yeshivah and *Bet Midrash*..

When Blum'ke was eighty years old, she thought the time was ripe for her to travel to *Eress Yisrael* in order to ensure that the rest of the *Shaagat Aryeh's* blessing would be fulfilled. When she consulted with R' Chaim of Volozhin, he countered, “If you have received a blessing from the *Shaagat Aryeh*, what is the rush? He promised that you would live to build it, but you have no guarantee for afterward.”

She took his advice and did not move to Yerushalayim until many years later, where she founded another *Bet Midrash*. As soon as it was built, she passed away. (A *Mazeldig Voch*)

The Lorraine Gammal A "H Edition

ω"ηηfω□χ, □X ω♦τ□κ, ♦v♣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



SHABBAT

BEMIDBAR ☆ ρ□X♣σfv□X, □X♥↑

Haftarah: Hoshea 2:1-22

MAY 26-27, 2017 2 SIVAN 5777

Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **6:45 & 7:15 pm** Shaharit: **4:32, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am**
Candlelighting: **7:57 pm** Morning Shema by: **8:16 am**
Evening Shema and Omer after: **8:55 pm** Shabbat Class: **6:25 pm**
Day 46 of the Omer Shabbat Minhah: **7:35 pm**
Shabbat Ends: **8:56 pm (R" T 9:28)**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Sunday Minhah: **7:00 pm**

A Message from Our Rabbi

”אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ”

“Who chose us from among all the peoples and gave us His Torah.”
(Daily blessing on the Torah)

The *Talmud* (*Nedarim* 81a) teaches us that the reason we lost the Land and the *Bet Hamikdash* was because we didn't say the blessing on the Torah first. The *Ran* quotes *Rabenu Yonah* who explains the concept of not reciting the *berachah* before learning. Their failure to say the *berachah* before learning was indicative of their level of regard for Torah. “The Torah wasn't important enough in their eyes.” They didn't feel its true worth.

Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro quotes Rabbi Aharon Kotler z”l who wonders about this explanation. The *Talmud* in other places lists the specific sins that caused the destruction of the first *Bet Hamikdash* and the sin that destroyed the second. Why then does *Rabenu Yonah* tell us that the *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed because we didn't appreciate the Torah, whereas the *Gemara* clearly states that the specified sins were the catalysts of destruction?

Rav Aharon explains with the following parable. Imagine that a man is driving his car on the highway and receives the news that he just won millions of dollars in a lottery. A moment later another driver cuts him off. How will this man respond? Perhaps, before he won the lottery, he would have responded with road rage. Now that he was won a fortune, he barely reacts to the person who cut him off, thinking, “I am not going to waste my time becoming frustrated and furious over something that is so inconsequential.” The incident does not even register on his radar.

“The Torah is far more precious than pearls (or jewels).” One cannot compare winning the lottery to “winning” the Torah. If we realized what we won we would not allow ourselves to become angry or jealous or exhibit baseless hatred. If we valued the Torah we would not be lured into a lifestyle of sins.

With this explanation, Rav Aharon reconciles the contradiction in the *Gemara*. Both temples were indeed destroyed for the specific sins listed, but on a deeper level, we committed those sins because the Torah was not important enough in our eyes.

As we approach the holiday of Shabuot, we must ensure that the prominence of Torah is the purpose of our existence. We will then remove any obstacles to rebuilding the third and everlasting *Bet Hamikdash*.

Shabbat Shalom and Happy Holiday.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

How Precious Life Is

Parashat Bemidbar begins with a census of the Jewish people. In fact, Rabbinic literature refers to the book of *Bemidbar* as the “*Humash* of the counts” (*Humash haPekudim*). Even in the secular world, the fourth of the “Five Books of Moses” is referred to as the Book of Numbers. The Torah in this *perashah* goes through every single tribe, listing how many people (males above the age of 20) were in that tribe, and then at the end provides a final tabulation: “These were all the counted ones of the Children of Israel, according to their fathers’ house, from twenty years of age and up, everyone who goes out to the army in Israel: All their counted ones were 603,550.” [*Bemidbar* 1:45-46].

The Torah’s narration then moves onto the story of the “Flags.” There were four Camps, each with three tribes. The Torah lists which tribe was in each camp. For instance, the Torah says [*Bemidbar* 2:3-4]: “Those who encamp to the front, at the east, shall be the division of the camp of Judah according to their armies – and the prince of the children of Judah is Nahshon son of Aminadav – its army and their counted ones are 74,600.” So too, for each of the tribes the Torah tells us the prince of the tribe and the number of people in that tribe – even though the Torah just listed these exact numbers in the previous chapter describing the census! If this were not enough, at the conclusion of the description of the flag encampments the Torah once again gives us the sum total of all the camps: “These are the counts of the Children of Israel according to their fathers’ house; all the counts of the camps according to their armies, 603,550.” [*Bemidbar* 2:32]

The *Ramban* gives an explanation for the apparent redundancy. He notes that three weeks transpired from the time when they were originally counted until the day they actually set up the system of travelling with the flags. During those 21 days, miraculously, no one died from the entire nation. They had 603,550 people at the start of the period and they had the exact same 603,550 people at the end of the period. According to actuarial tables, in 21 days, out of a population of 600,000+, it is inevitable that there will be deaths! I read a statistic recently that every single day there are 100 military funerals in the United States (of veterans of past wars). The *Ramban* claims that the reason the Torah repeated these numbers is to highlight the miracle that in 21 days nobody died.

However, we can still ask as follows. The Torah is so stingy with its use of letters. Why is this miracle so important that it was worthy of expending all these *pesukim* [verses] to tell us about this “miracle”? Reb Leib Rotkin wrote an insight on this question that he said he heard in the Yeshiva in Kletsk. He writes that this miracle is so important because of a major principle of Judaism: Whoever preserves the life of a single Jew is considered as if he preserved the entire world (*kol ha'mekayem nefesh*

achat m'yisrael k'ilu kiyem olam maleh). Life is so precious, that even saving one individual is like saving an entire world.

The *halachah* is that we desecrate Shabbat to save a person’s life. We even desecrate Shabbat to give a person a couple of extra hours. The Torah lets us know how important Jewish life is by spending all these *pesukim* to tell us one thing: nobody died! Human life is so precious that this is a miracle that bears repeating repeatedly in an elaborate manner with redundant verbiage, as the Torah does in this *perashah*. Every life makes a difference. Every person makes a difference. Every day of living makes a difference. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Why Was Zebulun Sent to the Merchant Marines?

Each Tribe had its own banner (“*degel*”). We typically think of flags as a secular phenomenon. Flags began with the Tribes in the Wilderness. Each flag had the symbol of the Tribe (usually based on Ya’akov’s *Berachot* to his children). The symbol of the Tribe of Yehudah featured a lion. The lion is king of the beasts. Yehudah was the tribe of monarchy. Therefore his flag featured a symbol of a lion.

The symbol of the Tribe of Zebulun was a ship. They were the merchant marine. They made their living by the sea. Consequently, their symbol was a ship.

The question can be asked; if the Tribe of Zebulun supported the Tribe of Yissachar, and G-d wanted to see to it that they earned a good livelihood, why didn’t G-d make life easy for Zebulun? Why couldn’t Zebulun have a nice clean job, where they sit behind desks, make some phone calls, and generate profits? Instead, they were sailors, traveling the distant seas in unsafe vessels. Those who “descend to the sea” (*yordei haYam*) are one of the categories of people that need to thank G-d for saving them (by reciting *Bircat Hagomel*) each time they return from a trip. The Tribe of Zebulun probably had the most dangerous profession of any of the tribes. Why wasn’t Zebulun given a break? He is a nice guy who is supporting his brother. Shouldn’t he be given the choicest of jobs? Why did Providence decree that his lot should be that of a sailor?

The *Kol Dodi* cites a *Gemara* [*Kiddushin* 82a] to the effect that the majority of sailors are pious (*rubam hasidim*). The reasoning is that “there are no atheists in a foxhole.” Surviving the ordeal of a journey at sea brings one closer to his Maker. Every time a sailor leaves dry land, he puts his life into G-d’s Hand. Sailors see and feel Divine Providence throughout their journeys. That is why G-d steered Zebulun into the merchant marine. He wanted Zebulun to support Yissachar. He wanted Zebulun to be generous (*Ba’alei sedakah*). The people who are most likely to be *Ba’alei sedakah* are the people who see the Hand of G-d in their livelihood.

I see this in my experience as well. Business people who have no idea how much they are going to earn in a certain year or how many clients or customers will come their way, always talk about the “*Hashgachah*” [Divine Providence] of their success. People who are salaried and receive the same paycheck every single week and know from the beginning of the year exactly how much they will be earning, are typically less sensitive to the Hand of G-d in their financial success. They are more likely to think, “I earn the living” (as opposed to “I earn the living by the Mercy of G-d”). They are more likely to think, “My strength and the might of my hand made me this great wealth” [*Debarim* 8:17].

People who are constantly reminded that they are dependent upon G-d are generally more generous. So, precisely because G-d wanted Zebulun to support Yissachar, He put him in a type of work where he would sense G-d’s involvement in