

The Dee Pirkei Avot Project

**שִׁמְאֵי אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה תוֹרַתְךָ קִבֵּעַ. אֲמַר מְעַט וְעֲשֵׂה
הַרְבֵּה, וְהוּי מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּסִבֵּר פְּנִים יְפוֹת:**

Shammai used to say: make your [study of the] Torah a fixed practice; speak little, but do much; and receive all men with a pleasant countenance.

Shammai taught: *aseh toratcha kevah* – Make your Torah a fixed matter.

There are primarily two ways to understand this important teaching:

1. The authenticity of Torah law must be consistently applied by us, without alterations made under pressure from others, or to suit our personal convenience. Through recognising that the Torah is Hashem's recipe for meaningful and happy existence, we tamper with it at our peril. *Ki hem chayenu ve'orech yameinu* - we are exceptionally privileged and fortunate to benefit from the timeless and timely relevance of Torah law, which is the essence of our lives and the length of our days.
2. We should establish fixed times to study Torah. When approached by people who ask, "What is the one thing you recommend for me to do, in order to strengthen my Jewish identity?", my answer is this teaching of Shammai. If we establish daily or weekly learning periods which are unmovable features of our diaries, preferably with a chavruta or within the family circle, our lives will be significantly enriched and spiritually enhanced. The 'keviut' (fixed nature) of the arrangement is strengthened when it includes a commitment to others to study with them. The initiative to study Pirkei Avot in memory of Lucy, Rina and Maya z"l is a fine example of this application of Shammai's teaching.

Discussion Points:

How can I 'fix' the observance of Torah and learning of Torah in my life?
What does it mean to 'speak little and do much'; how can I apply this?
Who do I know who 'receives all with a pleasant countenance' and what I can learn from them?

Idea by Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis

לעילוי נשמת:

לאה בת רפאל הכהן וציפורה

מאיה אסתר בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה

